From:	samira fink
To:	Board of Representatives; Lee, Benjamin
Cc:	John Bolognino; Tammy Agrebi; Aleksandra Moch; Alexa Eisenbert; Christina; eblomstrom@gmail.com; Elizabeth Barry; Fabiola Tambini; Hilary Starks; hugh@hubar.com; Jack; Janet W; Jeanine; Jeanne Davis"; Jennifer Henking; judyliebeskind@optonline.net; Julia Kemmerer; leah dalton; Lou Burch; Michelle Abt; Ryan Hoak; Sam Gordon; samira fink
Subject:	Written Testimony to the L&R committee meeting Dec 18th 2018: amendment of LR30048
Date:	Monday, December 17, 2018 10:15:53 PM
Attachments:	BYO COALITION_letter 12-17-2018.pdf

Dear L&R Committee Chairman Lee,

Please find attached written testimony from BYO Stamford as well as 7 other groups: BYO Greenwich, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Women on Watch, Innovate Stamford, SoundWaters, Surfrider Foundation CT Chapter, and the Stamford Land Conservation Trust. Our coalition strongly urges the L&R committee and the Board of Representatives not to approve the amendment which is to be discussed at Dec 18th 2018's L&R meeting.

We will attend at tomorrow's meeting and hope to be able to speak.

Please do not hesitate to contact us in case you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Samira Siskind (BYO Stamford)

December 17, 2018

Stamford Board of Representatives
888 Washington Blvd, 4th Floor, PO Box 10152
Stamford, CT 06904-2152

RE: Proposed amendment of §6(B) of ordinance LR.30.0419 "Restricting Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bags in Stamford" to limit applicability of the concept of the charge

Dear Board of Representatives Members,

Our organizations are delighted with the positive vote of the Board of this ordinance on October 1st, 2018. We all believe that this ordinance, to be implemented in April 2019, will help reduce Stamford's single use plastic bag trash significantly, will start to encourage consumers to reuse bags, and will help reduce the littering of plastic bags in our waters and our parks and thus will help improve our environment. We thank the Board and the L&R committee for approving this ordinance.

We understand that discussions during the Board Meeting have now resulted in an amendment to be discussed at the L&R committee of December 18th, 2018. This proposed amendment would seek to limit applicability of the charge of paper bags to certain customers, namely to recipients of Medicare, Medicaid and Cobra health coverage.

The undersigned groups all strongly oppose such an amendment for the following reasons:

1. As the intent of the ordinance is not to simply switch from plastic bags to paper bags (receipt of which would get charged 10 cents each), but instead to encourage customers to bring their own reusable bags, we believe that limiting the applicability of the charge is misguided. There is no necessity for said customer group to take the paper bags and pay the 10 cent charge. Instead, said customer group, same as everyone else, can bring their own bags and not face the 10 cents charge.
2. The ordinance already exempts one group from the applicability of the charge: section 6b of the ordinance refers to "items purchased pursuant to the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program or a similar governmental assistance program". This exemption already covers those that are most vulnerable, from an economic perspective. We would prefer not to widen this exemption. If the exemption was to be further expanded to Medicare/Medicaid/Cobra recipients, the City may see less of a switch to reusable bags but more of a switch to (likely single use) paper bags. We feel that the customer group that would be exempt under such language would be quite significant in size so that this could result in significantly less trash and recycling cost reduction (not to mention a potentially higher carbon footprint), as well as higher retailer costs.
3. Enforceability of the ordinance would be significantly complicated if expanding the exemption: Retailers would need to be trained to understand who is exempt. It may be difficult to identify Medicare / Medicaid / Cobra recipients. With regard to the exemption language as previously drafted retailers already have familiarity identifying these customer groups. Adding these additional customer groups however would be complicated and could result in extra cost and effort on the retailers' side. It would not be practical.
4. Lastly, this exemption would not be in line with many other ordinances: In CT, the three other plastic ban ordinances currently in place, Westport, Greenwich and Weston, all do not include an exemption of Medicare/Medicaid/Cobra recipients. Neither do any of the other CT draft ordinances currently

being promoted by various towns' BYO groups. We confirmed this with the BYO groups of Norwalk and Darien. Nation-wide other ordinances also do not include Medicare/Medicaid/Cobra exemptions, most notably Boston (rollout Dec 13, 2018).

Finally, BYO Stamford again encourages Stamford Board Representatives to reach out to us if their constituents would be interested in educational sessions or discussions.

BYO Stamford is also recommending setting up bag drop off / pick up bins immediately at government locations (library, government building, schools) so that reusable bags can be donated for those in need.

To conclude, the undersigned strongly request the L&R committee and board members not to expand the exemption of the applicability of the charge. Approval of the amendment risks significantly undermining the purpose of the ordinance, namely providing an incentive for customers to bring their own bags. Instead the amendment risks increasing Stamford's trash/recycling costs due to increased consumption of paper bags and increasing retailers' costs.

We look forward to talking to the committee on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Samira Siskind (samirafink@hotmail.com) with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

BYO Stamford
BYO Greenwich
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Women on Watch
Innovate Stamford
SoundWaters
Surfrider Foundation, CT Chapter
Stamford Land Conservation Trust