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To: DEEP RecyclingProgram

CT school flyer\_Admin.pdf  
236 KB

CT school flyer\_Community.pdf  
276 KB

Administrator Letter2.pdf  
350 KB

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Good morning,

Please find comments below.

Mandating organics collection across the state is the direction CT needs to go. CT DEEP assisting with permitting and grants for more facilities to open and operate would be advantageous. Large commercial facilities and school districts have an enormous amount of organics that should be captured and redirected. These facilities should be supported at the state level with education, support and initial funding to get these organics captured.

Wilton Public Schools started capturing organics from all four schools in 2018. One elementary school alone captured and diverted over 400lbs a week. Quick math that's approximately 8 tons of organics from ONE SCHOOL in ONE town. This is a scalable solution and we have helped other schools in CT move in this direction.

Our Zero Waste Schools Coalition formed in 2018 with now over 100 stakeholders from more than 22 towns in CT. These stakeholders are showing that they want to incorporate more zero waste models and waste diversion into their schools, not only diverting organics, but also reducing single use plastics and incorporating reusables into their schools. These models remove a large amount of waste from the waste stream and save money for the schools and towns over time.

A small group of us have been working to advocate for schools to allow and encourage reusables in their schools even during COVID. Please see documents attached.

CT DEEP and the CCSMM should be working to create large scale procurement opportunities and grants for schools to revamp their cafeterias and build in these diversion models. You have a captive audience, students, who then take those models home to the residential level to make change on a smaller scale.

Thank you very much for your time and efforts,  
Tammy Thornton  
President, Wilton Go Green  
Chair, Zero Waste Schools Coalition



## CONNECTICUT REUSE REVOLUTION

Dear Administrator,

In response to a recent increase in the use of disposables in Connecticut schools, the Coalition for a Safe & Healthy Connecticut and the Center for Environmental Health, in partnership with local affiliates - Wilton Go Green, Waste Free Greenwich and Mansfield Recycling Coordinator, have prepared fact sheets for both administration and school communities about the benefits of packing waste-free lunches in reusable containers. Reusable wares are a safe, environmentally friendly and less expensive choice for school lunches from home, one that promotes sustainable practices and waste reduction in communities.

Please find attached the fact sheets for your consideration.

Respectfully,

### Lead Contributors

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### Supporting State-wide Organizations

CT Green Leaf Schools

Connecticut Outdoor & Environmental Education Association

Greenwich Sustainability Committee

Mansfield Solid Waste Advisory Committee

### Supporting National Organizations

Clean Water Action

Center for EcoTechnology





## CONNECTICUT REUSE REVOLUTION

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Connecticut schools can maintain their commitment to sustainable practices by encouraging students to pack waste-free lunches in reusable containers to reduce waste, save money and promote student health.

### REUSABLES ARE SAFE!

- ✓ COVID-19 is mainly spread through aerosolized droplets when people are in close proximity rather than through contact with surfaces, according to the [CDC](#).
- ✓ COVID-19 can be found on both disposable and reusable materials, and [plastic](#) is one of the materials on which it survives longest, between 2-3 days.
- ✓ In a statement over [115 health experts](#) from 18 countries concluded, “Based on the best available science and guidance from public health professionals, **it is clear that reusable systems can be used safely by employing basic hygiene.**”

### REUSABLES ARE HEALTHIER!

- ✓ Choosing reusables reduces exposure to [chemicals of concern](#) found in disposable products, such as PFAS and styrene, which affect childhood growth, learning, and behavior, interfere with endocrine and immune functions, raise cholesterol levels, and increase the risk of cancer.

### REUSABLES ARE BETTER FOR THE EARTH!

- ✓ [Life cycle analyses](#) reveal that reusables have significantly less environmental impacts than single-use disposables, including energy use and air pollution.
- ✓ The typical American student discards 67 lbs of [lunch packaging](#) and 39 lbs of [uneaten foods](#). If every CT public school student packed a reusable, waste-free lunch, over **58 million pounds** of trash could be diverted towards the state goal of 60% waste reduction by 2024.
- ✓ Reusable, waste-free lunches are consistent with classroom lessons on environmental stewardship and civic responsibility, emphasizing the importance of protecting the planet and public health.

### REUSABLES SAVE MONEY!

- ✓ Packing a reusable, waste-free lunch costs less for families, schools and municipalities.
- ✓ A disposable lunch and snack [costs](#) about \$9.01 a day per compared to \$6.69 a day for a waste-free option, a difference of **over \$400 per person per school year**.
- ✓ Reusable, waste-free lunches help schools and municipalities cut hauling and disposal fees by reducing the amount of trash they send to incinerators.



## CONNECTICUT REUSE REVOLUTION

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Connecticut schools can maintain their commitment to sustainable practices by encouraging students to pack waste-free lunches in reusable containers to reduce waste, save money and promote student health.

*Reusables are safe, environmentally friendly and save money.*

- ✓ **SAFE!** Based on the best available science and guidance from [health experts](#), reusable containers can be used safely with basic hygiene and sanitation.
- ✓ **HEALTHIER!** Reusable containers made of longer-lasting, safer materials reduce exposure to [chemicals](#), like PFAS and styrene, found in disposable products that have negative health effects.
- ✓ **SAVES MONEY!** Packing a reusable lunch and snack instead of disposables can [save](#) families **over \$400 per student** per school year.
- ✓ **BETTER FOR THE EARTH!** [Life cycle analyses](#) show that reusables have **significantly less environmental impacts** than single-use disposables, including energy use and air pollution.
- ✓ **CUTS WASTE!** Every year the average student tosses 67 pounds of [packaging](#) and 39 lbs of [uneaten food](#). Lunch in reusable containers could save over **58 million pounds** of trash statewide that we pay to haul and burn.

### *5 easy steps to pack a reusable lunch*

1. Buy snacks in bulk and sort them into reusable bags and containers, for less waste and expense than individually prepackaged snacks.
2. Choose reusable lunch boxes, sacks or containers over single-use bags, foil or plastic baggies.
3. Drink water and other nutritious beverages from a BPA-free reusable bottle instead of single-use plastic bottles, cans, juice boxes and pouches.
4. Pack a reusable napkin and utensils.
5. Ask your children to bring home uneaten food, so quantities or selections can be adjusted as needed.

