

Testimony in support of H5492: Microplastics Reduction Act

George Voutes, 17 Shore Road, Bristol RI, 02809

Date of Hearing: March 20, 2025

To Chair Bennett and the honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

Microplastics are EVERYWHERE and are a local and global fossil fuel derived pollutant. It has been known for a very long time that microplastics not only impact wildlife, but also enter human bodies in ever increasing quantities. There is over 2 inches (and growing every year) of plastics on the floor of Narragansett Bay. This is killing the ecosystem of the Bay and every living thing in it. Humans eat fish from the Bay and are consuming microplastics unknowingly.

The severity of the threats to life from microplastics means we cannot just accept the risk and “go on with life as usual”. We need to take prudent, precautionary action and eliminate at least intentional additions of microplastics in products that we use every day.

H7515 takes constructive that action by:

- Defining microplastics.
- Acknowledging the high level of pollution with microplastics, including ingestion by humans
- Prohibiting sales and distribution in RI of any product containing intentionally added synthetic polymer microparticles (microplastics), by 2028.
- In addition, the bill sets a requirement for testing for microplastics and for developing a testing plan, leading to developing and implementing a statewide microplastics strategy. This will also enable Rhode Island to contribute local experience and data to the ongoing global effort to understand impacts and develop policy and regulation for mitigating the microplastics threat.

Since the bill was held and not voted on in 2024, I urge you to not lose more time and to bring the bill to a vote on the House floor in 2025. Waiting longer would be taking an unacceptable risk.

Thank you very much for considering my input, and thank you to Representative Boylan for introducing this important bill.

George Voutes

*George Voutes*