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Testimony of Christopher Hudgins  
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Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee  
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Good morning Chairman Meyer, Chairwoman Gentile and members of the Committee. My name is Chris Hudgins and I serve as the Vice President of Government Relations and Policy for the International Sleep Products Association (ISPA). For nearly 100 years, ISPA has represented the interests of mattress manufacturers and suppliers of components and services to the industry. Today, we represent nearly 700 companies including Blue Bell Mattress Company (also known as Comfort Solutions by King Koil) which was founded in Hartford in 1921 and is now based in East Windsor and Gold Bond Mattress which has been in Hartford since 1899. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views today on House Bill 6437 (HB 6437).

The International Sleep Products Association supports the consensus proposed substitute language for HB 6437 that has been distributed to the committee and we respectfully request that you adopt this language. This language reflects agreement between the Connecticut Mattress Stewardship Group and ISPA. ISPA and the Connecticut Mattress Stewardship Group have negotiated this language over the past few months and have developed a consensus proposal that will allow the state to become the first in the nation to establish a dedicated mattress recycling program without harming the mattress industry.

Last year, ISPA opposed the Committee's initial bill to establish a mattress recycling program because it would have required the industry to develop a costly and inefficient system for collecting and processing used mattresses. Our concerns have now been addressed and we feel that the proposed language will allow the industry to create a viable and efficient program that will allow Connecticut residents to easily recycle their used mattresses.

Most importantly, the proposed language allows the industry to collect a small "eco-fee" on each mattress sold at retail. The eco-fee will be visible on the invoice when a consumer purchases the mattress ensuring that they clearly understand the service they are receiving and that they have an option for recycling their mattress when they are done with it. The visible fee will also allow the funding to be easily tracked creating a level playing field for all manufacturers. This approach has proven successful with other products such as tires, auto batteries, motor oil, and paint. Without this eco-fee mattress manufacturers would not support this legislation.

Like the current version of HB 6437, the proposed language creates an independent, industry-administered nonprofit mattress recycling organization to facilitate the collection of the eco-fee and the development of appropriate infrastructure to recycle mattresses. As you are aware, there are already two mattress recyclers located in Connecticut and others have expressed interest in providing this service. The mattress recycling organization will collect discarded mattresses from appropriate collection points and utilize these businesses for proper recycling. The language also provides for

appropriate oversight from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and this Committee.

The mattress industry has a long and proud history of being proactive on environmental, product safety and related issues. Since at least the 1990s, ISPA has promoted “green” practices, with used mattress disposal and recycling being among the first issues we addressed. We promote responsible recycling and disposal practices, and encourage companies to establish used mattress recycling facilities. As recently as seven years ago, there were only three or four mattress recyclers in this market. Today, over 30 used mattress recycling facilities are operating in North America. We view this effort as the next step in this process.

We are pleased that we have been able to develop an appropriate solution for mattress recycling in the state and thank the legislators and policymakers who were influential in getting to this point. Thank you and I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.