

March 21, 2024

Representative David Bennett, Chair  
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
House Lounge – State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**Re: H.B.7691 “An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Toxic Packaging Reduction Act**

Dear Chairman Bennett and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

The Consumer Technology Association™ (CTA) respectfully submits this letter to voice our opposition to House Bill 7961 (HB 7961), An Act Relating To Health And Safety -- Toxic Packaging Reduction Act (Updates The Existing Toxic Packaging Act By Delaying The Ban On Pfas In Processing Agents, Until July 1, 2027, And Also Expands The Law By Banning PVC And Polystyrene In Packaging.)

CTA is North America’s largest technology trade association. Our members are the world’s leading innovators – from startups to global brands – helping support more than 18 million American jobs. Our member companies have long been recognized for their commitment and leadership in innovation and sustainability, often taking measures to exceed regulatory requirements on environmental design and product stewardship. We respect the overall intent of this bill to reduce the amount of packaging in the waste stream but cannot support this bill as written and offer the following comments that support our opposition.

**Overly Burdensome Substances Bans unsupported by Science.**

CTA has strong objections to the expansion of Rhode Island’s Toxics in Packaging Reduction Act, through the amendments proposed by this bill. Any regulation of toxic substances should be handled separately via Department conducted risk evaluations to determine if a material is toxic based on its risk and the exposure from the actual packaging material. The Federal government is leading in the area of chemical regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act. HB 7961 does not offer any scientific basis for the ban of the listed substances and CTA believes regulation should be based on sound science conducted through peer-reviewed risk evaluation.

CTA strongly objects to the ban on polystyrene in packaging. The electronics industry depends on the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS) for the transportation of electronic products. When transporting heavy, complex electronics, it is important that the packaging material is able to protect the transported product from breakage. EPS has outstanding shock absorbing and compression resistance abilities that perform well in protecting electronics. Additionally, EPS can be molded into any shape or form to meet a product’s protection needs. Some electronic devices, like camera equipment have odd shapes that can

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be difficult to protect. In these circumstances, EPS can be made to fit the exact specifications needed to perfectly fit the product, making it an ideal packaging material. Finally, EPS is valued for its lightweight properties. Because EPS is made up of 98 percent air, it does not significantly add to the weight of a packaged product and packaging material. This is important especially when transporting already heavy equipment. CTA does not support broad bans on plastic materials, like EPS, that are heavily relied upon by entire industry sectors for reducing product waste. Most importantly, CTA would like to emphasize that by banning EPS, Rhode Island will be increasing the amount of their overall solid waste in the form of broken electronics during shipment and the loss of valuable critical minerals and materials.

**Conclusion**

CTA appreciates the opportunity to address concerns around HB 7961 and we respectfully oppose for the reasons outlined above. We welcome further dialogue with the Legislature and other stakeholders and to determine a more successful pathway for reducing packaging in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ally Peck". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "A" and a cursive "Peck".

Ally Peck  
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