October 15, 2019

The Honorable Anne M. Gobi, Senate Chair

The Honorable Smitty Pignatelli, House Chair

Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture

Massachusetts State House

Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairwoman Gobi and Chairman Pignatelli,

I appreciate the consideration of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture of my **Senate Bill 495, *Resolve providing for an investigation and study by a special commission relative to mattress recycling.*** I urge the Committee to support the favorable passage of this legislation, which MassRecycle, the statewide nonprofit coalition dedicated to increasing recycling and waste reduction in Massachusetts, supports.

Most everything inside a mattress, from the springs to the padding, is recyclable, but many people are unaware of this. As a result, Massachusetts misses a tremendous opportunity to reduce its carbon footprint and save municipalities money each time a mattress is discarded through simple, yet effective methods that have proven to be successful at the local level.

UTEC, a social-services agency in Lowell that I represent, has demonstrated that mattress recycling can work and that there is high demand for such a service in our communities. Residents and businesses simply need to schedule a pick-up order online, at a nominal cost, and a crew of UTEC’s youth workers will collect the disposed mattresses and bring them to their warehouse in Lawrence. From there, the mattresses are then cut and stripped down to salvage the materials that are recyclable.

By recycling the components of mattresses and box springs that would otherwise become trash, UTEC was able to salvage approximately 195 tons of steel, 47 tons of foam, and 87 tons of wood for repurposing in 2017 alone. To put this into perspective, UTEC has recycled more than 20,000 mattresses, enough, if they were lined up, to approximate the length of the Boston Marathon route. In comparison, if the materials from inside these mattresses were removed, that length would equal a 5K.

S.495 would create a commission to examine existing mattress management options, including recycling and disposal infrastructure; and make recommendations on policies and programs to increase mattress reuse and recycling, and to mitigate associated financial and environmental costs. The bill includes an agenda of what topics the commission should review, suggests a list of those who should serve on the commission, and gives it reporting timelines.

Communities around the Commonwealth can reap direct and indirect fiscal rewards from mattress recycling. If enacted, the commission envisioned under S.495 will provide guidance to effect these savings.  For these reasons, I respectfully request that this legislation receive a favorable report from your Committee. Thank you for your time and your consideration of this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (617) 722-1630.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Kennedy
State Senator
First Middlesex District