



# Rivers Alliance of Connecticut

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## ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

February 2, 2008

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

**RB 661, AA Expanding the Beverage Container Redemption Provisions to Include Non-carbonated Beverages**

**HB 5215, AA Imposing a Five-cent Fee on Plastic Shopping Bags Provided by Retail Stores**

*Rivers Alliance is the statewide, non-profit coalition of river organizations, individuals, and businesses formed to protect and enhance Connecticut's waters by promoting sound water policies, uniting and strengthening the state's many river groups, and educating the public about the importance of water stewardship.*

Dear Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy, and Members of the Committee:

First, thank you chairmen and committee members for the many important environmental issues you are acting upon this session.

**Rivers Alliance of Connecticut is pleased to support RB 661.** Connecticut's deposit-redemption program has reduced litter on our streets and in parks, rivers, ponds, and wetlands. It has reduced energy use, while conserving valuable aluminum, glass, and petroleum. It has raised millions of dollars for thousands of Connecticut school and community groups -- all at no cost to Connecticut taxpayers.

We join the many other environmental organizations and experts who have advocated for this program, and wish to emphasize these points:

- The deposit redemption program is more than 200% more effective than curbside recycling. 65-70% of the containers included in the deposit redemption are successfully recycled as opposed to curbside recycling, which has only 30% success rate.
- Curbside recycling is a useful program but is not a substitute for the deposit-redemption program. Curbside pickup, which is not available in all Connecticut towns, depends on large trucks, which clog roads and create unnecessary carbon emissions and safety hazards. In many communities,

people are already going to the supermarket and other redemption centers to recycle containers covered by the program, so extending the program to cover more containers would not create more hassle or traffic for Connecticut residents.

Rivers Alliance also strongly supports RB 5215. We recognize that there are various opinions on the best approach to reducing wasteful overuse of disposable shopping bags. But there is unanimity in the environmental community on the need to provide additional operating funds to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). You have seen the report from the Council on Environmental Quality and no doubt recall the coalition effort coordinated last year by the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, both urging the state to begin to remedy the chronic underfunding of the DEP. You responded with an increase of \$3 million allocated for DEP operating expenses. That increase was canceled along with all budget revisions when revenues sharply declined. This year, the need is as acute as ever. A fee for disposable bags will reduce litter, save materials and energy, and help the agency charged with protecting the environment for all Connecticut residents.

Thank you again for your work to protect the air, water, and good earth of the state of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret Miner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Margaret Miner,  
Executive Director