

## **SBC Restaurant & Brewery**

Good afternoon Chairman Roy, Chairman Meyer and Members of the Environment Committee. My name is David Rutigliano and I am a member of the CT Restaurant Association and partner in the SBC Restaurant Group, operating restaurants in Branford, Milford, Hamden, Southport and Stamford. I am here to address Senate Bills 661 & 662.

The hospitality industry has always been on the frontline when it comes to recycling. We have separate containers for cardboard, cans and glass. We donate our used fry oil which is converted into bio diesel. We have self cleaning and in ground grease traps to help eliminate grease from getting into our water treatment plants. We pay to have these grease traps emptied and the used material is brought to a power plant to be converted into energy. As you can see we make every effort to be good corporate citizens.

We at SBC pay 5 cents for every bottle and can that we receive. Unlike a supermarket or package store we do not pass this charge onto the consumer. Instead, the nickel just goes into the cost of doing business. We collect, sort and store all empties until they can be picked up by our distributors. By doing so, we incur an expense. We delegate a specific employee to sort bottles and cans and place them back into their original box. Distributors will not take back items that they do not sell, nor will they not take "loose" backed bottles and cans. For sanitary reasons we construct an "out building" to store these bottles and cans.

We do not have a problem with the expansion of the bottle bill to include water and other drinks. We do, however, oppose the increase from 5 cents to 10 cents and the escheating of the funds to the state. Both of these proposals would have a significant impact on the restaurant industry.

The cost for me to perform the aforementioned duties is already factored into my cost of doing business. If the state escheats the unreturned bottle money, our distributors have already stated that they will increase prices. They use the unclaimed bottle deposits to offset the cost of handling the empty bottles. The bottlers will simply pass this additional cost to me. My business can not afford another cost increase. There is a limit to the amount I can pass along to the consumer.

It is estimated that up to 50% of restaurants in CT return their bottles. There are various reasons as to why a restaurant does not return their bottles: a public health issue can occur with the storage of bottles, there is a potential of rodent infestations, and restaurants may not have the space or staff to handle the returns. If the 5 cent increase were to pass, those restaurants who do not return their bottles would see a major increase in the cost of doing business.

SBC and the CT Restaurant Association believe that the bottle bill has worked as is for over 30 years and we oppose any increase in the refund value as well as the escheating of funds to the State. Thank you for your time. I'm available to answer any questions you may have.