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February 2, 2009

The Honorable Edward Meyer, Senate Chairman
The Honorable Richard Roy, House Chairman
Joint Committee on the Environment
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

RE: Senate Bills 661 and 662

Dear Chairmen:

The Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA)¹ strongly opposes Senate Bills 661 and 622 which both plan to expand the bottle deposit system to non-carbonated beverage containers and increase the current deposit from five cents to ten cents. GMA supports the goal of recycling and reducing solid waste, but expanding the bottle deposit program will only further entrench a narrowly focused, inefficient and expensive recycling system. Over the years GMA has supported efforts to move beyond the confines of bottle deposit systems in recognition of the proliferation of other, more comprehensive and efficient solid waste management strategies.

GMA continues to believe that mandatory deposit systems are costly, inefficient and targeted at a narrow segment of the solid waste stream. The removal of the valuable materials that make up beverage containers, through an expanded deposit system, from the recycling marketplace will increase the cost to municipalities to offer recycling while only marginally changing statewide municipal recycling rates in Connecticut. GMA continues to work toward a comprehensive recycling solution that will significantly increase statewide recycling rates and significantly reduce the average per ton recycling cost.

GMA recognizes that solid waste management remains an issue of public concern, and our member companies are fully committed to promoting and achieving sustainable solutions. In support of this commitment, GMA has formally joined with the National Recycling Coalition (NRC), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Food Marketing Institute, American Beverage Association, and International Bottled Water Association to form the National Recycling Partnership (NRP) to achieve these goals. Founded in 1978, NRC's objective is to eliminate waste and promote sustainable economies through advancing sound management practices for raw materials in North America. The current work of the NRP has identified two critical areas

¹ The Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) represents the world's leading food, beverage and consumer products companies. The association promotes sound public policy, champion's initiatives that increase productivity and growth and helps to protect the safety and security of the food supply through scientific excellence. The \$2.1 trillion food, beverage and consumer packaged goods industry employs 14 million workers, and contributes over \$1 trillion in added value to the nation's economy.

GROCERY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

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that must be addressed for recycling to reach its full potential: 1) raising public awareness and interest in recycling (re-branding recycling) and, 2) the need to demonstrate best practices in residential recycling programs. GMA continues to work with the NRP to identify additional partners and municipalities where the NRP's expertise can enhance recycling.

Additionally, container deposit laws do not recognize that all of us have a role to play in responsible solid waste management - businesses, consumers and government. Deposit laws unfairly burden the beverage industry and ignore that responsible resource management is a shared responsibility in which the entire public has a stake. Simply put, expansion of the bottle bill takes recycling in the wrong direction. Rather than exacerbating the problems inherent in the existing deposit system, Connecticut should direct its environmental resources toward integrated, cost-effective solid waste programs that maximize environmental benefits.

Lastly, container deposit systems were implemented 15 to 25 years ago as a targeted litter control measure, at a time when recycling rates were well below ten percent. Since then, comprehensive recycling programs have emerged, incorporating broad categories of recyclable materials as opposed to a single sector of the solid waste stream. In today's environment, container deposit systems are antiquated, unnecessary and, in fact, counter-productive. Ultimately, the costs associated with the inefficiencies of a bottle deposit system are passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices.

For these reasons, GMA strongly opposes Senate Bills 661 and 662. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of GMA. If you have any questions, please contact me at (617) 515-2458 or at lalusic@gmaonline.org.

Sincerely,



Lorin Alusic
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