

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the environment committee. My name is Eric Mueller, I am the President of the Connecticut Vending Association, and I'm here today to testify in opposition to S.B. 661 and S.B. 662 an act to expand the bottle bill.

- I never understood why originally, the deposits were applied to some containers and not others. I'll agree that this legislation could have been done better the first time, but I disagree with making these changes since it is not broken, and that the changes proposed have serious negative consequences for our industry.

For the Vending Industry, the expansion alone is a mortal wound.

- Because we are unattended, we don't have the capacity to charge for the deposit at the time of purchase. What we have done, is charge the same price for products, whether or not they had a deposit. The customer has never objected, as keeping one price was viewed favorable. We have managed to earn an extra \$1.20 per case on these items, and have pursued this opportunity wherever possible. In the game of basketball, this would be considered one of the easier baskets. Lord knows how difficult the tough baskets are.
- Our vending companies have become dependent on this nickel, and it has been incorporated as a significant portion of each operator's gross profit.
- Considering the aforementioned, with the expansion alone, our small vendors would most likely be forced to lose that nickel, and a considerable amount of their gross profit.

The dime would be devastating.

- Our vending companies would be forced to raise the price beyond what the consumer has for discretionary income.
- Law abiding vending companies will find themselves competing with operators bringing in transshipped products for almost \$3 a case cheaper
- It will be impossible for the Department of Environmental Protection to enforce the law appropriately, and vending companies will have no recourse for lost business.

Statistics for the rate of return on containers in Michigan are overshadowed by the States rate of unemployment-almost 11 percent and 1st in the nation. Michigan is miserably failing their people.

- Out of the top 5 states with the highest unemployment, 3 of them have bottle bills(Michigan, California, and Oregon)
- In my opinion, it is not the bottle bills alone that have escalated these states to record level unemployment rates, and deficits, but rather an ongoing "Attitude of Indifference" towards their business communities.
- It has been announced that our State would like to claim the escheats, or unreturned deposit money. Expanding and raising the deposits, and then claiming the escheats, crippling businesses, and losing valuable jobs during the process in my opinion represent an "Attitude of Indifference" towards the business community. It is evident, that this legislation is less about going green, than getting the green.
- We need to work together, not apart. As in the game of basketball, and I think our new President (who I've heard is a pretty good player) would agree, if you take away any teams, or in this case, any companies easy baskets, there will be no way they can win. Let's work together so our vending companies can survive and we can all win.