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**Environmental Committee Testimony
By Stan Sorkin, President
Connecticut Food Association
Wednesday, February 9, 2011
Testimony in Opposition to CB057**

Good afternoon, Chairman Roy, Chairman Meyer and Members of the Environmental Committee. My name is Stan Sorkin, President of the Connecticut Food Association. I am testifying in opposition to **CB057 An Act Expanding the Beverage Container Redemption System.**

The Connecticut Food Association is the state trade association that conducts programs in public affairs, food safety, research, education and industry relations on behalf of its 240 member companies—food retailers, wholesalers, distributors, and service providers in the state of Connecticut. CFA's members in Connecticut operate approximately 300 retail food stores and 250 pharmacies. Their combined estimated annual sales volume of \$5.7 billion represents 75% of all retail food store sales in Connecticut. CFA's retail membership is composed of large multi-store chains, regional firms, and single store independent supermarkets. CFA's 90 associate members include the supplier partners of its retail and wholesale members.

I am here today to voice the Connecticut Food Association's strong opposition to SB057 which would expand the beverage container system to include juice, punch, sports drink, and tea containers.

Over the years, our Association has testified and experience with the expansion of the system to water has borne out that:

- An expanded bottle bill is an outdated 1970's approach to a litter issue and does not achieve a 21st century solution to the total recycling goals of the state that an expanded single stream curbside program achieves.
- In the past three years, many towns have adopted single stream recycling with very positive fiscal results- reducing tipping fees and generating revenue from recyclables. The big blue bins have been overwhelmingly well received by residents. Removing these recyclables from curbside would reduce revenue for municipalities.
- It costs \$150 per ton to operate a simple curbside recycling system. It does not make sense to replace it with a system that costs \$5000 per ton to operate. Expanding deposits to additional containers is over 40 times more expensive than recycling these containers curbside.

- Supermarkets lose 2-4 cents per container on every container handled and expansion would only increase these costs as well as require additional space. These costs will be passed onto consumers in the form of higher prices.
- The expansion to water resulted in higher costs to the retailer from the water manufacturers as they had to recover their costs that they experienced from implementing the container return system. These costs were passed onto the consumer. Sales of bottled water decreased. Expect the same scenario when the bottle bill is further expanded.
- Revenue from escheats was far less than projected.
- Requiring consumers to store and return bottles is inconvenient, unsanitary, and time consuming.
- This is no longer a litter issue. When is the last time you have seen ½ gallon juice bottles or orange juice containers on the side of a highway or on a ball field?
- Revenue from escheats was far less than projected.

But, the current version of the expansion bill requires me to comment on the specific provisions of the bills. Connecticut would be the only state in the region that will have an expanded bottle bill to juice, punch, sports drinks, and teas. This would lead to over redemption, create incentives for fraud, and make Connecticut supermarkets the garbage dumps for containers from our border states-New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. This money would come directly out of the unclaimed nickels that the state is expected to use to fight the budget deficit.

In addition to expanding deposits to 100's of products that you would find in a grocery aisle, the term "carton" is included in the definition of a "beverage container" which means deposit expansion to noncarbonated beverages found in the dairy aisle. As documented by the water experience, this action would lead to increased cost of 10-50 cents per unit of these products for Connecticut consumers. Moreover, higher prices would lead to lower retail sales on these beverages putting pressure on supermarkets profits and cause potential loss of jobs. Current reverse vending machines do not handle the multiple sizes and shapes of juice containers and more specifically juice cartons.

Moreover, the vast majority of the new products are not distributed through a direct store delivery system but through distribution centers such as Bozzutos, Wakefern, and C&S that serve multi-state customers. This would require dual warehouse slot locations for these products, create accounting and redemption return system problems, and dramatically add to their cost of doing business in CT.

Finally, before you expand deposits to juice, I suggest you review the WIC statutes which prohibit charging WIC recipients deposits on WIC authorized items.

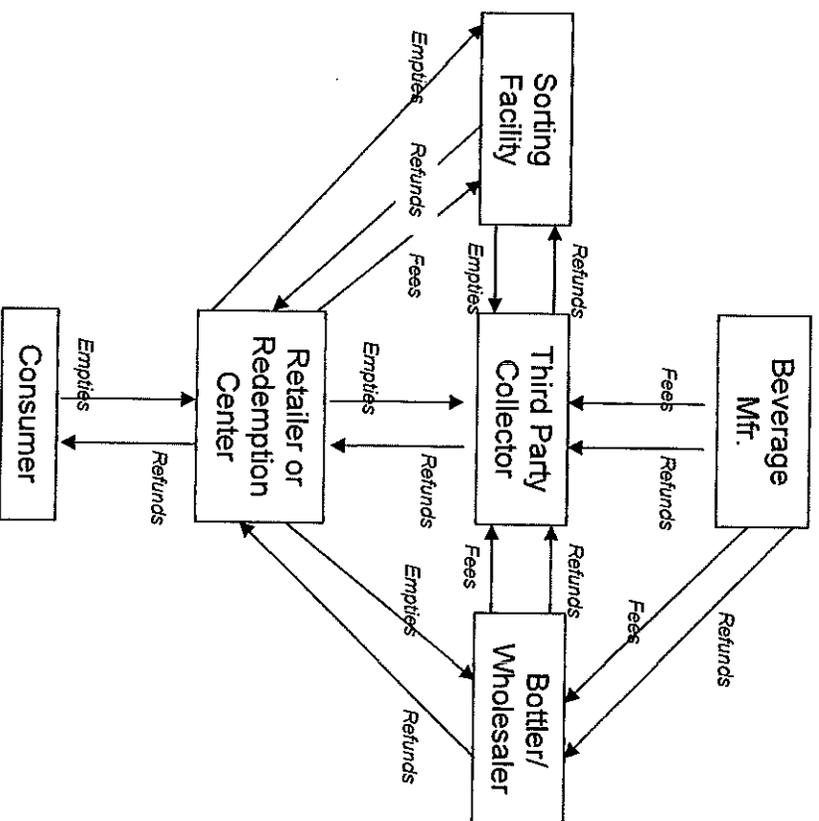
With consumer's budgets being strapped and more people receiving SNAP benefits, expanding the bill to more noncarbonated beverages is bad public policy. The emphasis should be on the cost effective system that prioritizes 21st century curbside single stream recycling not an antiquated bottle bill. As a matter of fact, the state of Delaware has passed a law repelling its bottle bill and providing for the statewide expansion of single stream recycling. That's the future of sound environmental policy. When will Connecticut see the big picture?

Expanding Connecticut's Bottle Bill —

Ridiculous

CB057 : >\$5,000/ton

Complicated
Bottle Bill:
\$500/ton



Simple
Curbside: \$150/ton

