



The Association of Food, Beverage
and Consumer Products Companies

February 9, 2011

The Honorable Edward Meyer
Co-Chair, Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Richard Roy
Co-Chair, Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: S.B. No. 57 - OPPOSE

Dear Chairmen:

I am writing on behalf of the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) to respectfully oppose S.B. No. 57 An Act Expanding the Beverage Container Redemption System. GMA continues to believe that mandatory deposit systems are costly, inefficient and targeted at a narrow segment of the solid waste stream. S.B. 57, which would expand the current beverage container deposit program to include juices, punches, teas and sports drinks, would be a regressive cost increase for grocery consumers and would not promote conservation or a clean environment more efficiently than curb-side recycling.

Based in Washington, D.C., the Grocery Manufacturers Association is the voice of more than 300 leading food, beverage and consumer product companies that sustain and enhance the quality of life for hundreds of millions of people in the United States and around the globe.

Founded in 1908, GMA is an active, vocal advocate for its member companies and a trusted source of information about the industry and the products consumers rely on and enjoy every day. The association and its member companies are committed to meeting the needs of consumers through product innovation, responsible business practices and effective public policy solutions developed through a genuine partnership with policymakers and other stakeholders.

In keeping with its founding principles, GMA helps its members produce safe products through a strong and ongoing commitment to scientific research, testing and evaluation and to providing consumers with the products, tools and information they need to achieve

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a healthy diet and an active lifestyle.

The food, beverage and consumer packaged goods industry in the United States generates sales of \$2.1 trillion annually, employs 14 million workers and contributes \$1 trillion in added value to the economy every year.

GMA believes that further expansion of the bottle deposit program is a costly, inefficient and inconvenient means of attempting to increase recycling. The existing beverage container redemption system inefficiently targets a very small segment of the overall solid waste stream. Beverage containers don't account for a large fraction of litter (8.5% on average) and expansion will have a minimal effect on litter, in fact noncarbonated beverage containers account for less than 1.4% of total litter. Connecticut consumers have also demonstrated their habit of throwing redeemables in with recyclables. The majority of bottled beverage containers are disposed of at home or at work, where the easiest way to capture and recycle those containers is by providing recycling bins at those locations and the cost per ton of material recycled is typically three times higher in a deposit system than in a comprehensive curbside program.

It should also be noted that the current system has a low participation rate with millions of cans currently not being returned, even with deposits. The state's own Office of Policy Management estimated several years ago that there were then \$20 million in unclaimed bottle deposits – that means 400 million cans were NOT being redeemed even before the expansion to waters. People are curbside recycling these containers, not redeeming them. Consumers who do not redeem their containers cite the nuisance, inconvenience, and mess as factors against bringing containers back. People are already recycling these beverage containers even without a deposit. Adding bottle deposits to more containers will not incentivize these consumers to redeem, it simply amounts to another tax the consumer must pay.

In addition, GMA believes that the state should carefully evaluate and assess the true environmental costs of expanding this redemption center-based program, including the impact on energy consumption and emission from consumers making trips to redemption centers vs. placing recyclable containers in their curbside bins. Also, the removal of more recyclable containers from curbside recycling programs will increase the cost of such programs, when many municipalities use the sale of collected materials to offset collection costs. The potential loss of convenient curbside recycling programs could

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- discourage consumers from recycling at all if they are forced to drive these items to redemption centers. Research shows that convenience and simplicity are keys to increasing recycling participation (e.g. single stream recycling). Finally, it should also be noted that the increased volume and variety of containers to be redeemed will also have an impact on retailers who must take up scarce retail floor space to collect

and store refuse. This is both costly in lost revenue and can contribute to sanitation challenges that must be addressed by the retailer. A litter program or a statewide, comprehensive curbside recycling program will better serve the goals of environmentalists for a cleaner landscape without unduly and unfairly burdening grocery stores and consumers.

For these reasons, GMA respectfully asks for your NO vote on S.B. 57. Thank you for your attention and consideration of our position and I welcome any opportunity to continue this discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Costa", is written over a vertical line.

Gregory J. Costa
Director, State Affairs

cc: Members, Environment Committee

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