

Testimony of Krishna Lingiah

The Connecticut Public Interest Research Group

In support of

Proposed Senate Bill No. 67:

An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Juices, Teas, and Sports Drinks under Connecticut's Bottle Bill

I would like to thank the Environment Committee, and Chairs Senator Edward Meyer and Representative Linda Gentile for allowing me to submit my testimony in support of Senate Bill 67, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Juices, Teas, and Sports Drinks under Connecticut's Bottle Bill.

Currently, the Bottle Bill covers beer, soda, and water with a 5 cent redeemable deposit that incentivizes recycling. But unfortunately the last update in 2009, which added water, did not include the litany of other beverages like teas, sports drinks, juices, energy drinks, coffee-based beverages. This bill would correct some of that but not all. We should update the Bottle Bill and SB 67 is currently a good first step, but it can be and should be made better!

Last semester, I was the Bottle Bill Campaign coordinator for UConnPIRG, the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group's chapter at UConn-Storrs. We led a very effective campaign to gather over 4,000 petitions, most of which were signed by students from across the state. I was impressed not just by the enthusiasm and turnout of the UConn student body, but at how compelling the case for the Bottle Bill was with students.

When asked to support the Bottle Bill, many students initially replied that they already recycled, and were not sure why adding a five cent deposit to more beverage containers would be good for them. However, when they were shown the facts, which indicate that the bottle deposit increases recycling and redemption rates up to nearly fifty percent for beverage containers, most of them immediately changed their minds—even though they didn't plan on redeeming every bottle, they were still supportive of the bill for the good it would do the state and the environment.

In conclusion, I urge the Environment Committee to strengthen SB 67 and then pass it onto the Connecticut General Assembly. This is a good bill for Connecticut. Thank you again for this opportunity to contribute testimony.