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Written testimony in OPPOSITION of House bill 6033,
AN ACT EXPANDING THE BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION SYSTEM

Good Afternoon Senator Kennedy and Representative Albis and members of the Environment Committee. My name is Lorelei N. Mottese and I am here representing Wakefern Food Corp., a cooperative of independently owned supermarkets under the ShopRite banner. There are currently 27 ShopRite's and 11 corporately owned PriceRite's operating in the State of Connecticut. We employ approximately 8,400 associates. It's noteworthy that statewide, independent grocers provide 15,750 jobs and pay over \$605 million in wages. In today's economy, we all understand the importance of creating and sustaining jobs.

Wakefern/ShopRite's dedication to environmental stewardship is multifaceted and includes Wakefern's Elizabeth, New Jersey, recycling plant, which since the 1970's has operated 16 hours a day, six days a week. The facility recycles a variety of materials including white pharmacy pill bottles, plastic grocery bags, corrugated cardboard, and paper. In 2013, ShopRite recycled 128,056 tons of cardboard, 3,187 tons of plastics, 733 tons of newspaper, 332 tons of office paper, 48 tons of metal, and 2,922 tons of waxed corrugated cardboard. That's 135,278 tons of material that didn't go to a landfill.

ShopRite has promoted bag reuse for many years. Today, we continue to provide a broad assortment of reusable bags, and all ShopRites have a plastic bag recycling bin at the front of each store. In 2013, more than 61 million bags were reused by ShopRite customers. In fact, in the last 7 years ShopRite customers have kept approximately 321 million bags out of landfills! This means less trash was sent to the landfills AND fewer resources were needed to create new bags.

It is programs such as these that help better the environment.

Expanding Connecticut's bottle bill to include juice, tea, sports drink and other beverages not currently covered by the bottle law will have a detrimental impact on our ShopRite and PriceRite stores and it will impede curbside recycling progress that has been made in Connecticut.

To accommodate the increased volume of containers that would result from this change in the law, bottle rooms would need to be expanded, new reverse vending machines would need to be purchased, and additional personnel will need to be hired. Absent costly modifications to current operations, customers will spend more of their valuable time standing on longer lines waiting to redeem their additional containers.

While we oppose House bill 6033 and expanding the bottle law, we would support the expansion of curbside community recycling programs. Curbside recycling programs are clean and easy for the consumer, while remaining cost effective and having the most impact on reducing litter in our communities. Curbside recycling programs encompass all types of recyclable materials as opposed to just beverage containers. Recycling also encourages everyone in the community to do their part to take care of the environment.

We are all concerned about the environment, but it is important that we recognize new technology and methods in regards to recycling. We support curbside recycling programs and especially single stream recycling technology.

We stand committed to working with the State of Connecticut to achieve environmentally sustainable goals for the betterment of all who live and work here, and ensuring that we continue to create and sustain job opportunities.

Thank you.