March 6, 2015

Joint Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Support for HB 6033, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Juices, Teas, and Sports Drinks Under Connecticut's Bottle Bill

Dear Committee:

Surfrider Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves and beaches through education, conservation, activism and research. Surfrider Foundation engages in many campaigns and programs including our Rise Above Plastics Program, which aims to keep plastic pollution out of our oceans.

We submit this letter in support of HB 6033 on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation Connecticut Chapter and its thousands of members and supporters throughout the state. We are pleased that the Joint Environment Committee is seeking to expand Connecticut's current bottle bill to include juice, tea, and sports drinks to the definition of "noncarbonated beverages," and thus be subject to the same requirement to have a five-cent refund value, as are waters, flavored waters, and carbonated beverages. Inclusion of juice, tea, and sports drinks is a simple and sensible revision to the current bottle bill, and an uncomplicated means to address the proliferation of bottle waste in Connecticut. Surfrider Foundation strongly supports the bill, for public health and the health of Connecticut's waterways and marine environment.

<u>Connecticut Must Continue to Address the Waste Problem</u>

In a state with over 3 million residents, Connecticut generates close to 4 million tons of municipal solid waste each year and disposes (i.e. does not recycle) almost 2.6 tons.[1] Similarly, the amount of beverage bottle waste is staggering. Nationally, more than 100 million tons of beverage containers were wasted (landfilled,

[1] *See* http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2714&q=324892&deepNav_GID=1645

incinerated or littered) in the last decade—that's about one-and-a-half-trillion individual bottles and cans.[2] Wasted (not recycled) bottles translate to higher energy consumption to produce new bottles, higher greenhouse gas emissions, and more litter.[3] Littered beverage bottles are often and easily swept away down storm drains, where they eventually enter our waterways. Underwater cleanups show that beverage container litter makes up approximately 20% of marine debris (on a unit basis). On the 2012 International Coastal Cleanup Day, 598,076 volunteers collected some 9,184,428 pounds of litter from 20,776 miles of beaches. Eighty percent of the debris collected was made up of the top 10 items found, which included plastic and glass bottles, and beverage cans (and which were, in descending order: cigarettes; caps/lids; plastic beverage bottles; plastic bags; food wrappers/containers; cups, plates, forks, knives, spoons; glass beverage bottles; straws, stirrers; beverage cans; and paper bags).[4]

Such litter has serious consequences on our waterways, beaches, and oceans. Bottles can wash ashore, littering our beaches, endangering public health, and negatively affecting coastal tourism.[5] It also has serious consequences on marine life, which routinely mistake plastic debris for food. An estimated 100,000 marine mammals and up to 1 million sea birds die every year after ingesting or being tangled in plastic marine litter.[6] Concerns regarding plastic bottles don't end there. First, plastic does not biodegrade into elements or compounds commonly found in nature like other organic materials, but instead, photodegrades into smaller pieces of plastic causing land and water pollution that is virtually impossible to remediate. Second, plastic debris absorbs toxic, environmentally persistent chemicals such as DDT, PCBs, PAHs, and flame retardants found in our waterways. In 2011, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Association found that plastic debris accumulates pollutants such as PCBs up to 100,000 to 1,000,000 times the levels found in seawater.[7] Thus, aside from the negative effects of plastic consumption by marine life, such as intestinal clogging and starvation, fish can become contaminated by plastic's absorbed toxins, which bioaccumulate up the food chain negatively

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[2] Gitlitz, Jennie, Container Recycling Institute. Bottled Up: Beverage Container Recycling Stagnates (2000-2010) U.S. Container Recycling Rates & Trends, at 9.
[3] Gitlitz, *supra*, at 17-22.
[4] *See* Ocean Conservancy, International Coastal Cleanup: 2012 Data Release (2012), *available at*: www.oceanconservancy.org/ourwork/marine-debris/2012-data-release.html.
[5] *See* Natural Resources Defense Council, Waste in Our Water. The Annual Cost to California Communities of Reducing Litter That Pollutes Our Waterways (Aug. 2013), at 16.
[6] *See* United Nations. *Marine Litter: Trash that Kills* (Nov. 2001); available at: http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/marinelitter/publications/docs/trash_that_kills.pdf
[7] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, "What We Know About: Plastic Marine Debris." (Sept. 2011), *available at*: http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/Gen_Plastic-hi_9-20-11_0.pdf

impacting animals who feed on fish, including some humans. These toxins pose serious threats to humans and wildlife who consume them.

Additionally, at least one 2013 study documented the high costs to municipalities and states of keeping bottles and other litter out of stormdrains and waterways (*e.g.*, direct costs for stormdrain cleaning and maintenance, street sweeping, and stormwater capture devices; and indirect costs such as loss of coastal tourism revenue).[8] The study illustrates that it makes economic sense to address the bottle litter problem *now*, by creating legislative incentives to minimize plastic bottle waste and the associated obstacles as much as practicable before bottles have an opportunity to be littered, rather than try to engage in costly and inefficient cleanup after the fact.

The Surfrider Foundation Connecticut Chapter routinely cleans beaches, removing wasted bottles from the water, shore and sands. With a better Bottle Bill in place, we will see fewer wasted bottles.

It is critical that Connecticut do its part to keep bottles out of its waste stream, and its waterways and oceans. Incentives for recycling, such as Connecticut's bottle bill's deposit and refund system, are one such tactic; HB 6033 can improve this tactic.

Bottles With Deposit and Refund Incentives Greatly Increase Recycling

In 2010, the national bottle recycling rate in 2010 was only 36.9 percent.[9] However, the 11 U.S. states that had active container deposit laws, such as Connecticut, consistently recycled covered containers at rates of 66%-96%, while the overall recycling rate for beverage containers in non-deposit states was 30%. States without deposits saw recycling rates for aluminum, PET plastic bottles, and glass of 39%, 20%, and 25%, respectively, compared to states with deposits, who saw recycling rates for those bottles at 84%, 48%, and 65%, respectively.[10] America's recycling rate for bottles with no deposit, including water, juice, sports drinks, iced tea, is only 23 percent.[11] ***Thus, it's clear that where there are deposit and refund incentives, bottles have a much greater chance of being recycled.*** Therefore, juice, sports drink, and tea bottles should be included in any bottle deposit and refund system, in order to incentivize the recycling thereof. Otherwise, there's a huge gap in the bottle bill, which will only continue to grow.

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[8] *See* Natural Resources Defense Council, Waste in Our Water. The Annual Cost to California Communities of Reducing Litter That Pollutes Our Waterways (Aug. 2013).
[9] Gitlitz, *supra*, at 8.
[10] *Id.*
[11] *See* http://www.masspirg.org/media/map/yes-question-2-expand-bottle-bill

Juice, Tea, and Sports Drinks Make up a Large and Growing Portion of Bottles, and Should be Covered by Connecticut's Bottle Bill

Sales of traditional bottles and cans have grown 22% in the decade from 2000 to 2010, and the non-carbonated beverage category constitutes a large portion of that increase. In fact, non-carbonated beverages accounted for all of the non-alcoholic sales growth over the last decade, while soft drink sales dropped by 10%.[12] Fruit beverage sales have remained roughly level over the past decade, with 15 billion units sold in 2010. Meanwhile, ready-to-drink tea sales rose from 4.8 billion in 2000 to 7.9 billion in 2010 (a 64% increase!), sports drinks sales more than doubled, to 5.4 billion in 2010, and energy drinks sales rose from 163 million sold in 2000 to sales of 4.2 billion in 2010.[13]

The waste these bottles create cannot be ignored. Surfrider Foundation strongly supports HB 6033's inclusion of juice, sports drinks, and teas into Connecticut's bottle bill. Additionally, Surfrider Foundation suggests the Committee strengthen the bill by including energy drinks, which are also clearly a large and growing portion of the market. We appreciate your attention to the very serious threats that beverage bottle pollution poses to Connecticut's coastal resources and water quality. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Testimony submitted of behalf of:
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[12] *Id.*
[13] Gitlitz, *supra*, at 12.