



New England Convenience Store Association

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

February 3, 2015

H.B. No. 6033 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF JUICES, TEAS AND SPORTS DRINKS UNDER CONNECTICUT'S BOTTLE BILL.

Dear Chairman Kennedy, Chairman Albis and Members of the Committee:

The New England Convenience Store Association's (NECSA) membership consists of independent, family owned convenience stores, independently owned franchise stores as well as chain-operated convenience stores. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores [NACS] there are approximately 1600 convenience stores operating in Connecticut employing over 18,000 people.

Our members wish to be recorded in respectful opposition to H.B. No. 6033. However well-intentioned this proposal may be, NECSA believes that expanding the bottle bill will adversely affect many smaller-sized businesses and their customers in Connecticut and will not achieve the environmental objectives sought by the proponents. Our reasons for opposing this proposal are as follows:

Particularly for small stores, the costs at the counter for consumers will go up and our business, which sells primarily single-serving sizes, get hit the hardest in terms of a percentage of overall cost. For example a \$1.00 bottle of juice would require the same fee collection as a 2 liter bottle of soda. This is a 5% increase in product costs for single serving sizes and will hurt consumers and our stores.

In convenience stores every square foot counts and so does cleanliness. This proposal will hurt the ability of many stores to sell fresh products and maintain and create jobs in Connecticut. Most convenience stores are small in terms of square footage. Our members will be forced to sacrifice needed floor or storage space for additional redemption capacity. The reality is that many of the returned bottles will not be in a sanitary condition. This could be particularly troublesome as many convenience stores try to expand their salad, sandwiches and fresh food offerings and need to try to find space to safely keep these used containers in their store. This is a serious issue that affects the economic viability of convenience stores which operate on very small margins. In a small store EVERY square foot counts!

We believe that there are better ways to achieve improvements in recycling rates. The bottle bill expansion focuses on a very small piece of the waste created in the Connecticut. Enhancing and expanding curbside pickup, making recycling in easier in public areas and creating more comprehensive litter prevention programs are much more effective approaches to improving recycling in Connecticut.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,


Stephen Ryan, Executive Director