

# Green Planet Redemption Center

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March 11, 2016

Environment Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Rm3200  
Hartford, CT 06106

Subject: Raised Bill No. 384 – Public Hearing Testimony

Good Afternoon Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lori Beam, and I am the owner of Green Planet Redemption Center located in Bristol, CT. I have owned and operated my store since 2006. I am here to support Raised Bill #384 however I would like to urge the committee to amend this bill to reflect a change to the current handling fees. The proposed bill Sec. 3 Subsection (d) calls for a handling fee of 1.5 cents for beer and 2 cents for water, soda and similar carbonated beverages. These fees have been in place for far too long and I ask that they be updated to 3.5 cents. These updated fees have already been addressed in other bottle redemption states in the Northeast and it is time that our state recognizes this and offers my business and others here with me today the respect for doing business in Connecticut. This update is crucial and would provide our redemption centers a fair chance to survive in today's economy.

All of my expenses as a small business owner have significantly increased over the years: rent, utilities, insurance, wages, etc. I am positive there is no business that could continue to operate under these circumstances. If these fees are not updated I do not feel that my redemption store will survive much longer. I am looking for your support and now would be the perfect time for this committee to recognize that a change must happen and happen NOW!

As I stand here today and ask for your help, I would also like to present to this committee 4,500 signatures that I have collected over the past few months at my store. These signatures represent the huge outpouring of support from nearly every person that has stepped foot in my store and courteously listened to myself or my co-workers explain our situation. I would need much longer than 3 minutes of your time if I were to include all the many comments we have heard over these past few months on how absurd it is that we are actually in this position as a small business here in CT providing a very important service to the residents of this state.

I have many customers that rely on the extra money they make by redeeming their bottles and cans whether it's for gas, food, clothing or even money for extra activities for their children. On any given day I see many retired senior citizens that have members of their families save their bottles & cans for them to return for a little extra money to subsidize their fixed income. Homeless men and women in my community pick up bottles and cans off the streets to survive which is keeping our streets,

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parks and neighborhoods clean. My store is not only a place for the general public to return their bottles & cans but I provide a valuable service to Boy Scouts, Church Groups, Youth Ministry, Organizations for the Handicapped, Dance Clubs, Animal Shelters and many other non-profit organizations by offering fundraising opportunities. All of these individuals rely on this money for travel expenses, uniforms, equipment purchases, pet food or to help people less fortunate than themselves.

Once again, I support this bill but urge you to also please consider this amendment. I am very proud of the business that I have established and I especially want to be part of a better future but the burden that this long overdue and outdated "handling fee" causes for me will make that nearly impossible. There are fewer and fewer redemption centers like mine mainly because of this issue.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my story and I hope and pray this is not the end for redemption centers but the beginning of a fair chance to move forward!

Sincerely,

*Lori Beam*

Green Planet Redemption Center

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