

March 10, 2016

Joint Committee on Environment
Hon. Ted Kennedy, Co-Chair
Hon. James Albis, Co-Chair
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Testimony regarding CRI's support of SB384

Dear Chairpersons Kennedy and Albis and members of the Committee,

The Container Recycling Institute (CRI) supports SB384, "An Act Concerning the Application of the Bottle Bill to Wine and Liquor Bottles for Purposes of Funding State Parks." SB384 would update Connecticut's existing beverage container deposit law, or "bottle bill," to include wine, sparkling wine and champagne, and liquor (spirits).

Other U.S. deposit states have successfully added wine and liquor to their bottle bills. Iowa, Maine, and Vermont all have deposits on liquor (spirits), and Iowa and Maine also have a deposit on wine. These three states enjoy beverage container recycling rates estimated at 86%, 90%, and 85% respectively. In Ontario, Canada, wine and liquor were added to their successful deposit program in 2007.

SB384 would be a boon to glass recycling in Connecticut. Glass recycling is now in jeopardy in many parts of the United States, including Connecticut, because there are insufficient markets for the huge volumes of mixed-color, broken, and contaminated glass that is generated by curbside recycling programs and MRF processing systems. Curbside glass, in fact, can *cost* as much as \$20/ton to recycle—when markets can be found for it at all—versus clean, separated deposit glass that has a \$20/ton scrap value. Municipalities in Connecticut report that glass that is collected in curbside programs is not being recycled; rather it is being used as daily cover at landfills. CRI estimates that the addition of wine and liquor bottles to the deposit system would generate **over 23 thousand tons of clean, uncontaminated wine and liquor bottle glass**: in contrast to fewer than 9 thousand tons of wine and bottle glass currently collected at curbside: glass that is not being recycled into new bottles or even fiberglass, but is actually being landfilled as "alternative daily cover."

Environmental benefits: the environmental benefits of additional wine and liquor bottle recycling in Connecticut include significant energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions. CRI estimates that the greenhouse gas emissions reductions alone would be equivalent to taking more than 1,200 cars off the road.

Cities and towns would also benefit financially from SB384, because their collection and processing costs for both recycling and trash collection and disposal would go down. As previously mentioned, about 23 thousand tons of clean wine and liquor bottle glass would be recycled under SB384, tonnage that is currently a liability rather than an asset for municipalities, because it is all collected now via single-stream recycling, and is processed at municipally-operated materials recovery facilities (MRFs) that are expensive to operate. In other words, what is now a cost of \$20/ton or more to dispose of would become a revenue generator. Municipalities will also benefit from reductions in beverage container litter under SB384.

In Ontario, Canada, the City of Toronto documented cost savings of \$448,000 in 2007 as a result of putting wine and liquor containers into the deposit program. The cost savings were due to a reduction in processing and disposal costs.

Implementation date should be extended. Should SB384 pass, the proposed implementation date of October 1, 2016 may be unrealistically soon. Giving distributors, retailers, and consumers a year to comply with the regulation might be prudent.

Unclaimed deposits from wine and liquor bottles not redeemed would generate approximately \$3 million per year for state parks. With a 15-cent deposit value, and a 70% redemption rate, we estimate that \$3.1 to \$3.8 million would be generated in unclaimed deposits to fund state parks. (That number would be lower if the redemption rate was above 70%, and higher if the redemption rate was below 70%.) When new container types are added to programs, we typically see a low redemption rate the first year, followed by gradually rising redemption rates for the next 2-3 years, until the program reaches maturity and the redemption rate levels out.

In summary: for all of the above reasons, the Container Recycling Institute urges you to support SB384, and thereby strengthen the Connecticut container deposit program: the most effective recycling program in the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this bill. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Susan Collins
President, Container Recycling Institute

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About the Container Recycling Institute (CRI)

CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of used beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging. Its mission is to make North America a global model for the collection and quality recycling of packaging materials. We do this by producing authoritative research and education on policies and practices that increase recovery and reuse; by creating and maintaining a database of information on containers and packaging; by studying container and packaging reuse and recycling options, including deposit systems; and by creating and sponsoring national networks for mutual progress. CRI envisions a world where no material is wasted and the environment is protected. It succeeds because companies and people collaborate to create a strong, sustainable domestic economy.