

March 11, 2016

The Honorable Carlo Leone
The Honorable David Baram
Co-Chairmen, Joint General Law Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3500
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony Against Senate Bill 312

Dear Chairmen Leone, Chairman Baram, and Members of the Joint General Law Committee:

My name is Chuck Riegler, Senior Vice President of Governmental Affairs & Compliance for TOMRA North America, Inc. with headquarters in Shelton, Connecticut. I have 25 years' experience working in the recycling industry, first as a municipal recycling coordinator for the City of Norwalk, CT. Then for TOMRA working with stakeholders to understand and optimize deposit systems.

We are opposed to proposed Senate Bill 312 titled - ***AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO STUDY BOTTLE BILL BEVERAGE CONTAINER REFUND VALUES AND REDEMPTION FEES.*** This bill would create a study committee to review the state's container deposit recycling refund program and institute a 4-cent non-refundable tax on containers to support recycling in the state.

TOMRA is both a system operator for the deposit-return system, and also a manufacturer of technology used to sort material collected by the curbside programs. For your consideration – I have included company information and a summary of our perspective.

Technology and Services Provide By TOMRA and Other Connecticut Companies



TOMRA BRIEFING

TOMRA creates sensor-based technology for companies to optimize their production processes.

You know us two ways. The Reverse Vending Machines (RVM) found at grocery, package stores and redemption centers used daily by consumers; and the high-speed optical sorters used in Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) to sort curbside material.

TOMRA of North America

One Corporate Drive
Suite 710
Shelton, CT 06484
USA

Tel: 203.447.8709
Cell: 203.449.8393
Email: chuck.riegler@tomra.com
www.TOMRA.com

TOMRA invented the Reverse Vending Machine for retailers 40 years ago, and is now a leading provider of reverse vending technology and material recovery services; with over 60,000 RVMs in 40 countries, including all 10 U.S. states with deposit laws.

In Connecticut, we employ 80 drivers, office workers and machine technicians. All of whom would be displaced by a repeal of the Deposit-Return law. Both our headquarters and technology service organization are both located in Shelton. A trucking group operates out of South Windsor. Along with our competitor ENVIPCO, with its own headquarters in Naugatuck, we have invested in a collection infrastructure of almost 3,000 RVMs across the state. Our system collect some 25mm lbs. of aluminum cans, PET plastic bottles, glass bottles and cardboard beverage cartons.

Good recycling requires a focus on Convenience and Quality

Deposit systems reverse the logistics of beverage sales, enabling us to operate a system as efficient, but more effective, than curbside collection in the recycling of used beverage containers. But our experience is that the two programs complement each other – providing the community a total approach towards recovery. Connecticut is literally surrounded by examples where the numbers have proven this for three decades: Massachusetts and New York.

Deposit-Systems and Curbside give people options that fit their lifestyles. Both programs serve the entire community everywhere beverages are consumed; and after 30 years the habits are established.

Where curbside offers to collect a broader range of materials we see generated at home – its weakness is in preserving material quality – landfilling a portion of what is collected. Deposit systems are designed to collect packaging consumed everywhere – while preserving the material quality and value at the beginning.

Studying the program is easy enough to do by meeting with the key players who live and work in Connecticut. TOMRA asks the Committee to support policies that reduce litter and grow the recycling economy. Consider first returning the unredeemed deposits to the brand owners to pay for program costs – paying remaining funds to municipal curbside programs for the beverage containers they collect too – and please REJECT SB 312.

Thank you

Sincerely,



Charles W. Riegler Jr.
Senior Vice President, Governmental Affairs and Compliance

cc. State Senator Kevin Kelly
State Representative Ben McGorty
State Representative Jason Perillo

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