

March 10,2017

Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee good day my name is

Francis Michael Bartolomeo I am the owner of Fran`s Cans & Bart`s Bottles a redemption center in Watertown Ct. and I am here today to support Bill 5618, this Bill is to increase the handling fee for redemption centers I am very much in favor of this Bill, see we have never had an increase at all in this business and we are losing redemption centers every year, we just lost two more redemption centers ,it is too hard to run these businesses working under 1978 standards which means the same pay ask your selves have you had to wait 39 years for an increase in your pay I do not think so when the Bottle Bill started minimum wage was 2.50 Today it is 10.10, I have seem so many of our businesses go out with NO support from this state I have been here fighting this same issue since 2009, and every year someone comes up with another Bill that does not allow us to focus on our bill and then we lose our hopes of surviving and then the politicians tell us maybe next year, last year it was they Know who you guys are now , yes they do the businesses that are closing because we get NO support from the people who control our future and businesses this is so wrong and to allow the distributors every year try and get out of an increase because they can`t afford the increase, shame on them too they have more power and resources they can afford lobbyist and they are not cheap, the distributors are what you would call bullies you have no idea how mistreated we get by the distributors we just lost two businesses that were RVM redemption centers meaning all machines I would have to guest there are about Ten redemption center let in a state that has 169 towns and every year the question comes up our recycling rate is going down it is very simple to figure this out as we close the harder it is to redeem so the consumers throw their material in the garbage, see people who have a lot do not want to go to the machines the people that have a little can go there you the people of this state have a program that is a proven winner and you are just letting it slip away, see part of the problem every year we get new members in office and each year we have to try and get the word out to new Politian`s and try to have them understand our businesses and situation.

In 2009 when the water bottles were introduced that`s all the distributors did was pass along the nickel to the consumers see the distributors can do what they want with pricing and make up any amount of money they want but we have no resources or power to fight these people that`s where you come in.

And please understand this program was never designed to make the State of CT. millions of dollars a year it was for litter control and the environment meaning be Green not GREED and as the state makes millions and we are going out of business does this seem right very upsetting situation to be in when we do not get one penny of money that belongs to the consumers.

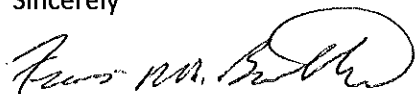
In 2009 it was estimated that Connecticut generated 500 million water bottles that is only water not counting soda and beer and larger size bottles and glass when this bill was started for two reason the environment and the litter, as Americans in general we use 50 billion plastic water bottles a year and our recycling rate as a country is 23 percent as a country I believe our rate is much higher than that more like in the fifties percent.

Our business does so much for the public and for the state we generate funds for all types of groups

Boy and girl scouts, Historical society, Town of Bethlehem, battered women's groups out of Harwinton Ct., I can go on and yes, we are the ones keeping the streets clean do you have any idea how long it takes to decompose a plastic bottle well about 400-500 years it seems like you want to go back to 1978 but please remember back then we were not talking about the volume's you are now, I could go on forever so inclosing I beg of you people to at least push bill 5618 though to give us some hope last year we were told by the politicians they were working on something for this year let's see if they hold true.

Please remember in making your decision we do not do super bowl commercial we really can't afford them but other people seem to spend millions on them maybe just one less and we can get an increase the bottle bill will be 40 years old next year.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Francis M. Bartolomeo". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Francis M. Bartolomeo