



March 13, 2017

Statement of Highland Park Markets - Environment Committee

Tim Devanney, Owner, Highland Park Markets

In Support of * H.B. No. 5618 - AN ACT CONCERNING AN INCREASE IN THE HANDLING FEE FOR BOTTLE REDEMPTION CENTERS

Highland Park Markets is a family owned company operating 5 stores in central Connecticut. Headquartered in Manchester, Connecticut, Highland Park Market's story begins in 1886 and continues today. Jack Devanney purchased this small home town market and took hold to those same traditions. Since then, Jack's son, Tim, has taken over as president and today, the third generation of Devanney's has been active in playing a role in the day to day operations of the stores. From the beginning, Highland Park Markets has strived to immerse themselves into each community that we are located and have been blessed to be welcomed by a strong family base of customers in each area that we enter. Being a Connecticut business is something we are extremely proud of.

On behalf of Highland Park Supermarkets and the over 500 employees we have in the state of Connecticut, I urge you to support HB 5618 – To promote recycling and the continued employment of workers in the bottle redemption industry.

Last year the total universe of initiated deposits was over 1.3B annual containers, with 665mm being redeemed. Grocery stores took back 72%. However, not all of this redeemed volume, or the funding associated with it, is split evenly. As the cost of paying employees to further handle the bottles increases, with the minimum wage, the actual loss on redeeming deposits continues to escalate. With the current handling fee of \$0.0175 in CT we simply cannot cover our costs, which was the original intent of the handling fee.

This proposal has a split handling fee of \$0.025 for beer and \$0.03 for soft drinks. Almost every other deposit bill state has a \$0.035 handling fee and if we retailers are going to operate in a bottle law environment going forward, it is appropriate after 38 years, to adjust our fee accordingly, along with all others who provide this service.

We will continue to educate and motivate our customers to do what's right for our state through public outreach campaigns, public service announcements, marketing campaigns, consumer incentives, and a sustained measurable approach. Highland Park has been on the forefront of innovative and practical initiatives that reduce our carbon foot print and make our state a better place to live, work and raise our families.