

**Testimony Submitted to the Environment Committee of the CGA Re HB 5618: An Act
Concerning an Increase in the Handling Fee for Bottle Redemption Centers**

Public Hearing March 13, 2017

Dear Representative Demicco, Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, and members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Tollie Miller. I am a resident of Bloomfield, CT and a member of Save Our Water CT. I am speaking in favor of HB 5618: An Act Concerning an Increase in the Handling Fee for Bottle Redemption Centers.

I have always been proud of the environmental record of CT. We have led the way in many environmental issues, both regionally and nationally. We are now living in times where many of the important steps that have been taken to preserve our environment are under attack. It is critical that we continue to lead the way in carefully and intelligently protecting our environment for generations to come.

As a longtime environmentalist who served for many years on my town's Conservation Committee, I was deeply disturbed when I found out that one of the largest water bottling corporations in the world was coming to our state, and my own town, to establish the first massive water bottling plant in our region. Of course, I share the many concerns raised about the impact of this industry on our public resource, water. But I have equal concerns about the proliferation of toxic, degrading plastic bottles from this plant and others like it. When I was speaking to officials in my own town about the impact of the 10 million single serve bottles that will be manufactured DAILY by the Niagara plant, I was met by the argument that "Nobody can stop the use of plastic, so why try?" I find that argument indefensible.

We MUST address the proliferation of plastic. If we have any sense of responsibility to our children, grandchildren and generations to come, we simply must take action. Already, plastic is choking our oceans and waterways. It takes 450 years for plastic bottles to break down. They then become a soup in our oceans, poisoning marine life, and eventually the animals and people who consume that marine life. Plastic kills a million seabirds and over 100,000 marine animals every year. 95% of adults in the United States have detectable levels of BPA in their urine. Exposure to chemicals such as [BPA](#) has been correlated with disruptions in fertility, reproduction and other [health effects](#).

So, we can't afford to be complacent, or uneducated, or lazy about this. Continuing to hold a high bar for recycling sets a standard for others to follow. Indeed, CT has led the way in recycling programs. Now we have to support and expand our programs to do our part to address the particularly damaging impact of plastic bottles. In this bill before us, that means increasing the handling fee to keep our recycling programs viable. It means increasing the bottle deposit to 10 cents, to continue to educate and encourage the public to recycle. AND it means expanding the bottle deposit to all other forms of bottled beverages. Please consider the health and well-being of your constituents, your children and your grandchildren when you consider this bill. Thank you for your attention.