

NOTES FOR APPEARANCE BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE OF THE CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I am a Meriden resident, where I've been a Sustainability Consultant for corporate clients for the last 3years. Before that I was Global Vice President of Environment, Health, and Safety for Stanley Black & Decker.

I believe in government for good, and I believe that Connecticut is considerably farther down the evolutionary path than many other states when it comes to sustainability. One has only to look out our commitment to ensure that the minimum wage is one day a living wage.

We are one of 11 "bottle bill" states (including NY, MA ME, and VT) with container retention programs requiring deposits on containers at point of sale, and refund upon their return. States with bottle bills have a higher container recycling rate: containers are less contaminated and therefore more valuable, and because the material has a cash value, people are less likely to litter.

Recycling reduces pressure on natural resources and landfill volume at the same time providing cash income for underserved citizen groups including retirees and non-profits who fund programs their through recycling drives.

- The retailer pays the distributor 0.5/container.
- The consumer pays the retailer 0.5/container.
- The retailer or redemption center pays the consumer 0.05/container returned.
- The distributor pays the State of Connecticut .05 / unclaimed deposit.
- Distributors pay redemption centers a handling fee of .015-0.20 / reclaimed containers

The recycling industry is a key contributor to the Connecticut economy. "Roughly 2,700 jobs in the recycling supply chain and another 2,100 indirect and induced jobs currently contribute \$275 MM in payroll and \$59 MM in tax revenue to the CT economy."¹

State recycling centers are hamstrung by Connecticut's handling fee rate of .015-0.20 / reclaimed container, which has not changed since the bottle bill inception 30 years ago. In contrast, distributors in neighboring states reimburse distribution centers 0.03- 0.04 /container. I suspect that maintenance of that overly low rate is due in large part to the power of beverage industry lobbying. Beverage companies can also hold recycling centers hostage to unreasonable operational demands such as requiring hand- rather than machine-sorting of their containers.

I am sorry to report that the large M&M Redemption Center in Wallingford closed recently due to market pressures described above, and Connecticut is the loser here.

As a customer, consumer, and stakeholder in Connecticut environmental programs I ask that you increase the state mandated handling fee from distributors to reflect current benchmarked rates of 0.03-0.04 / container in neighboring states.

A robust statewide community of redemption centers will ensure that we achieve our states' long range vision of solid waste management, with the "(s)hift from a 'throwaway society' towards one that promotes a reduction in the generation and toxicity of trash, and that treats discards as valuable raw materials, feedstock, and energy resources."²

Sincerely,

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¹ CT Economic Resource Center, 2012

² Report of the Modernizing Recycling Working Group, presented to Governor Daniel P. Malloy on 27-Dec-2012

