

March 10, 2017

Testimony To The Connecticut General Assembly's Committee on Environment

Statement from TOMRA on [H.B. No. 5618](#) (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING AN INCREASE IN THE HANDLING FEE FOR BOTTLE REDEMPTION CENTERS. (ENV)

Chairmen and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chuck Riegler, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for TOMRA North America, Inc. I have 25 years experience working in the recycling industry, first as the first municipal recycling coordinator for the City of Norwalk in the 1990's; then for TOMRA working with stakeholders to understand and optimize deposit systems.

On behalf of TOMRA and its customers, I want you to consider a few points as you review HB 5618:

Both Beverage Retailers (Dealers) and Redemption Centers perform significant functions in the deposit-return process:

Deposit-Return Process



Consumer Protection: They provide a convenient point of redemption for consumers to redeem used beverage containers for deposit.

Accountability: They ensure that containers that are redeemed are covered by the program – and assigned to the appropriate Distributor for deposit and handling fee reimbursement.

Recycling: By separating the used beverage containers by material type, they ensure that the material quality is preserved and 100% of the containers are recycled. Grocery stores redeem 72% of the redeemed containers, and redemption facilities redeem 21%.

Connecticut is the only state that has a two-tiered Handling Fee – one for Beer and one for Soft-Drinks and Waters.

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There is no study nor report that recommends such a split between the two beverage categories. Although HB 5618 proposes to raise the Handling Fee by 1cent, this bill proposes to continue this split handling fee. Operationally, GLASS bottles are more difficult to manage – and they are mostly used for the sale of Beer. States that have recently raised their handling fees – New York, Massachusetts, Vermont and Maine all use one Handling Fee for all container types and beverage categories.

There is a relationship between the value of a Handling Fee and the number of points of return.

After New York raised its Handling Fee to 3.5cents, beverage retailers invested in their redemption services, and entrepreneurs invested in siting almost 1,000 more redemption centers. More choice allowed consumers and high-volume redeemers opportunities to select the location that served their needs best.

TOMRA asks the Committee to support policies that reduce litter and grow the recycling economy. TOMRA's headquarters is located in Shelton, CT – and we offer you our experience and expertise as you consider policy that would modernize Connecticut's deposit-return law.

Thank you



Charles W. Riegler Jr.
Senior Vice President, TOMRA

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