



March 13, 2017

Statement of Geissler's Supermarkets Inc. - Environmental Committee

Robert Rybick, 4th Generation Owner/Treasurer, Geissler's Supermarkets Inc.

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

Geissler's Supermarkets is a fourth generation family owned company operating 6 stores in Connecticut and 1 in Massachusetts. Geissler's started in 1923 with A.F. Geissler delivering groceries to the small village of Broad Brook in the Town of East Windsor, CT. Today, third and fourth generations of the Geissler's family still own and operate the stores; continuing the reputation for excellent quality food and customer service.

On behalf of Geissler's 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. Stores in Fairfield County are overrun with volume by professional redeemers while stores in our part of the state, Hartford and Tolland Counties, lose money from lack of volume. Currently four of our six stores in Connecticut are losing money on redemptions when we compare the cost of leasing the reverse vending machines to the handling fee paid on the volume we collect. This loss does not take in to account the additional cost we incur emptying the machine, transporting the bottles and cans to a storage area and then facilitating the pickup by our redemption partners. 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.

Geissler's Supermarkets 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. Geissler's 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.