For the Environment Committee  
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, River Steward  
March 8, 2019

The Connecticut River Conservancy is the voice for the Connecticut River watershed, from source to sea. We collaborate with partners across four states to protect and advocate for your rivers and educate and engage communities. We bring people together to prevent pollution, improve habitat, and promote enjoyment of your river and its tributary streams. Healthy rivers support healthy economies.

The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) strongly supports HB 7294 AAC BOTTLE REDEMPTION IN THE STATE.

Connecticut’s Bottle Bill is long overdue for modernization by expanding to juice, tea, sports drink, and energy drink containers; an increase to a 10 cent deposit; and a much needed increase in the handling fee.

Recycling rates for bottles & cans are more than twice as high in states with container deposits than in states without them. The states with the strongest, most comprehensive bottle deposit laws on the books have the highest recycling rates of all. Expansion and a ten cent increase will strengthen our bottle bill and increase recycling rates as well as provide cleaner recyclable materials.

The cost of doing business and providing services has increased since the Bottle Bill was first enacted nearly four decades ago, the handling fee must be increased so that dealers and redemption centers can perform their responsibilities under the law. The handling fee increases proposed in HB 7294 are reasonable and brings the fee in line with fees in surrounding states.

We also encourage the committee to amend the bill to include nip containers. CRC coordinates the Source to Sea Cleanup which is a yearly trash cleanup of the Connecticut River system all along the four-state watershed (NH, VT, MA, CT) – rivers & streams, shorelines, parks, boat launches, trails and more. Each fall, volunteer group leaders coordinate local cleanup sites where thousands of participants of all ages and abilities spend a few hours picking up trash. We ask volunteers to submit data on the trash they find. Last year just in Connecticut, 9,978 beverage containers were reported and 3,019 of those containers were nips. That’s 30% of all beverage containers found. This was the highest percentage of any other category of beverage container.

Thank you again for introducing a bill that modernizes our bottle bill and we encourage the committee to pass this bill as written.