I would like to thank the Environment Committee for this opportunity and their commitment to recycling in our state.

**NOT A PENNY INCREASE IN 38 YEARS**

The bottle bill was initiated in 1980 when the minimum wage was around $3. As years progressed the prices of goods and services increased. The minimum wage increased. The businesses were able to increase their prices to offset their costs. The bottle bill since its initiation back in 1980 had same handling fees as we do now. What happened to our increase? It’s time we modernize our bottle bill as other states have done for some time now. All the bottle bill states have much higher handling fees. We are the lowest. The state has seen many redemption centers go under in just past year.

**WHY ARE WE FALLING BEHIND OTHER BOTTLE BILL STATES?**

How can other states have a thriving bottle bill with handling fees up to 4 cents and we are only at 1.5 cents on beer and 2 cents on carbonated soft drinks and water? Raising the handling fee be more in line with other bottle bill states is necessary in modernizing the Bottle Bill.

**MODERNIZATION BENEFITS ALL**

Everyone benefits from the modernization of the Bottle Bill. Giving a split in Escheats to the distributors would assist them while the state would remain revenue neutral from the unclaimed revenue that the new containers proposed in this expansion would generate.

**MODERNIZATION IS THE KEY**

With the increase in handling fee, I would certainly hire more, invest in technology, and possibly open more locations. Opening of more locations would also alleviate the issues that grocery stores and liquor might raise about space to store empties. Before anything can happen, it needs to be a sustainable business model.

**WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT**

We urge the committee to support us in increasing the handling fee and overall modernizing the bottle bill.

Thank You,

Ratilal Garala
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