HB 7294 – SUPPORT - AN ACT CONCERNING BOTTLE REDEMPTION IN THE STATE

Senator Cohen, Representative Demicco, and distinguished members of the Environment Committee:

We would like to ask the Environment Committee to support HB 7294, which includes increasing the handling fee to $.035, as part of overall plan to modernize the Bottle Bill. We are one of a few redemption centers left in the state. Our overhead costs have risen increasingly over the past 38 years when the current handling fee rates was set, and we are desperate to survive.

The current handling fee rates are 1.5 cents on beer and 2 cents on carbonated soft drinks and water. This is compared to rates in New York of 3.5 cents, Massachusetts at 3.25 cents, Vermont at 4 cents, and Maine at 4 cents.

Raising the Connecticut handling fee to be more in line with these states’ handling fees and modernizing the Bottle Bill is necessary to maintain a functional and efficient deposit redemption infrastructure. The impact on consumers will be minimal to nonexistent. By raising the handling fee, redemption centers, grocery, and package stores will be able to fund their operations in a way that creates jobs, tax revenue, and increases recycling rates.

To assist distributors, we suggest incorporating a split in the Escheats with distributors, and expanding redeemable containers making the increase in the handling free revenue neutral to the state.

The Connecticut legislature has made a commitment to recycle and the Bottle Bill is an integral part of that commitment. If the handling fee is raised, more redemption centers will open improving recycling rates across the State and creating jobs.

We feel that a comprehensive approach that includes a handling fee increase allows the Bottle Bill to continue benefiting the environment, Connecticut citizens, and industry.

Thank you.

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Owner

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