Testimony of

Environment and Human Health, Inc.

By

Nancy Alderman, President

Bill 5340

H.B. No. 5340 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE MODERNIZATION OF THE CONNECTICUT BOTTLE REDEMPTION PROGRAM.

To the Chairmen of the Environment Committee, Senator Cohen and Representative Demicco and Members of the Environment Committee:

Environment and Human Health, Inc. strongly supports BILL 5340
Connecticut lawmakers need to pass a modern and expanded Bottle Redemption Bill.

The present Connecticut Bottle Redemption Bill was enacted in 1978. The bill returns deposit amounts to customers for bottles and cans of water, beer and soda. It does not require deposits on iced teas, sport drinks and juices. These newer drinks have become much more popular in the forty years since the bill was passed, and they need to be included in an update Bottle Redemption Bill.

In Connecticut’s last year’s legislative session, proponents tried to pass new legislation on the bottle redemption law but the bill was defeated. We must now pass a more effective waste reduction measure into law.

Among the states that have Bottle Redemption Laws Connecticut has the lowest rate of returns?

Connecticut. According to the Bottle Bill Resource Guide <https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bottlebill.org%2Findex.php%2Fcurrent-and-proposed-laws%2Fusa%2Fadditional-links&data=02%7C01%7Csbusemeyer%40courant.com%7Cf5c81e91cbb1467b7dca08d7af0fe5ef%7Cf7da0482aed242fa80233b240fb6598d%7C0%7C637170355134462420&sdata=U6%2FNfjuXAlNJYzUt3rYxxdvs%2FKACxr08ovLoHDeUTs%3D&reserved=0> , Connecticut’s relatively dismal rate of bottle returns stands at 50.7%.

At 10 cents a bottle, Michigan residents redeem an impressive 92.2% of the beverage bottles they buy.
Higher deposit fees mean higher rates of bottle returns.

States and countries with higher redemption fees have better rates of return. For example, in Norway, the redemption rate of bottles and cans is 91%; this is probably due to their high redemption fee equivalent to 25 cents in U.S. currency.

This is why Connecticut should raise its redemption fee from 5 cents to 10 cents.

What happens to the deposit money when bottles and cans aren’t returned?

When bottles and cans are not returned the deposit money goes to the state of Connecticut, and becomes part of our state’s budget.

Connecticut should put some of these unredeemed bottle deposits into educating our residents about the advantages of redeeming their bottle and can deposits.
What happens to those bottles and cans that aren’t returned?

The glass bottles that are not included in the Bottle Redemption Bill end up in recycling bins, and because they break into glass shards they contaminate the rest of the recycled material and cause it to be useless. It is therefore extremely important to get the glass bottles out of recycling and included into an expanded Bottle Bill where the glass becomes valuable to glass recyclers.

The beverage containers not redeemed become part of the waste stream. Unreturned bottles and cans often end up in the garbage, littering our streets and our shorelines. Those thrown out end up in landfills, or are incinerated – Connecticut incinerates them.

Americans waste about 425 beverage containers per person per year. This is twice as many bottles and cans as are recycled. Beverage containers represent 40 to 60 percent of litter.

With half of Connecticut’s bottles and cans ending up as waste, the state needs to look at why there is such a low rate of redemptions.

We are suffering a serious plastic epidemic.
Many soda, iced tea, juice, sport drinks and water bottles are plastic.

States need to take the problem of so much plastic in our waste stream seriously. Redeeming plastic bottles is an effective way to reduce the plastic waste stream.

Connecticut should pass an updated Bottle Redemption Bill that reflects the needs of the 21st century. This will not be easy - grocery stores are not in favor of expanding the Bottle Bill to include juices, iced teas and sport drinks. Beverage companies have shown opposition to a better Bottle Bill, and some recyclers are not supportive.

Despite this resistance, the state needs to pass a modern and expanded Connecticut Bottle Redemption Bill that will reduce the waste stream, reduce plastic waste, save on aluminum and benefit the state.

Thank you for your attention,

Nancy Alderman, President

Environment and Human Health, Inc

For the March 6, Public Hearing