Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-516 / Bill Status / Public Hearing Testimony
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDEMPTION RATE AND REFUND VALUE OF BEVERAGE CONTAINERS.
Vote Date: 3/31/2026
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/27/2026
File No.:

Disclaimer: *The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Finance, Revenue, & Bonding Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill aims to adjust the redemption rate and refund value of beverage containers within the state of Connecticut. Due to the potential of over redemption and potential fraud within this system, this bill would provide more fairness to the beverage container program.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Vincent Candelora, 86th Assembly District supports the bill's intent to require the Commissioner of Revenue Services to determine the redemption rate for each deposit initiator and the statewide redemption rate of all beverage containers for 2026, and if it is found that Connecticut's redemption rate of any deposit initiator exceeded 100%, the refund value would be required to be reduced to $0.05.

Lawrence Cafero, Executive Director & General Counsel, Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of Connecticut supports returning the redemption rate back to $0.5 to combat excessive cross border redemptions.

Jean Cronin, Executive Director, Connecticut Package Stores Association supports the increase in fines for fraudulent out-of-state redeemers and increasing enforcement to serve as a deterrent. CSPA requests that a reasonable amount of time be given before reducing the redemption

rate back to $0.5 to give retailers time to sell floor stock that has already been charged the $0.10 deposit.

Liz Donohue, VP Government Affairs, Primo Brands supports the bill's added accountability to the bottle deposit policy and the accompanying review of the state's redemption data to determine if the deposit is at the appropriate level for legitimate redemption.

Bree Dietly, Independent Consultant, American Beverage Association supports the bills intention of restoring the $0.05 redemption rate if enforcement actions fail to bring out-of-state redemption under control which is being addressed in SB 457

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Tina Bergers, Vice President, Evipco
Tim writes testimony in opposition of the bill. She highlights Evipco's role as a Connecticut-based leader in reverse vending machine technology that supports the state's container redemption program. She emphasizes that their organization helps prevent fraudulent redemptions by verifying state-specific barcodes and advocates for beverage companies to adopt such barcodes. While acknowledging concerns about cross-border fraud, Tina does still oppose reducing the deposit value from 10 cents to 5, arguing it would discourage consumer participation and reverse progress made since modernization. She urges to allow recent enacted penalties and system improvements the time to take effect before considering any further changes/amendments.

Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters opposes the bill on the grounds that it would increase plastic pollution, reduce recycling rates, increase costs for municipalities and lead to potential job losses of up to 1600 positions that this system currently supports and believes that improving enforcement measures in SB 457 is a better alternative than what SB 516 aims to do.

Liz Dupont-Diehl, CT Citizen Action Group opposes reducing the redemption back to $0.05 on the grounds that it would cause increased plastic pollution, reduced recycling rates, higher costs for municipalities and potential job losses.

Dipak Patel, Owner, Capitol Redemption Center opposes the bill for the following reasons:
- Reduction in customer participation due to lower refund value
- No financial protection for independent redemption centers
- Increased financial strain on local businesses.

Coalition of Independent Redemption Centers
A coalition of Independent Redemption Centers submitted testimony to express their opposition for HB 516. In their testimony, they express their thoughts on the local job risks of these centers. The labor-intensive operations and number of entry-level jobs for various groups of people and feel this bill could force many centers to reduce those operations. They also feel this legislation could harm "professional collectors" who gather redeemable containers for income and how cutting the value to 5 cents could harm them significantly. While they do acknowledge the need for reform to combat cross-border fraud, they do express a need for an alternative answer. The Redemption Centers who are a part of this testimony are as follows…
- Bloomfield Redemption Center, 54 Granby St., Bloomfield
- Cash Can Redemption Center, 120 Tolland St., East Hartford
- East Haven Bottle Return, 99 Commerce St., East Haven
- AAA Redemption Depot LLC, 4 Niblik Rd., Enfield
- Capital Redemption Center, 25 Meadow St., Hartford

- Manchester Redemption Center, 95 Hilliard St., Manchester
- MT Bottle Return, 373 East Main St., Middletown
- Central CT Redemption Center, 208 Hillhurst Ave., New Britain
- Maruti Bottle & Can Redemption, 27 Dodge Ave. #3, North Haven
- EZ Bottle Return, 392 Boston Post Rd., Orange
- Bottle & Can Return, 65 Mascolo Rd., South Windsor
- Bottle Collect Redemption Center, 35 Baeder St., Torrington
- Vernon Bottle Return, 77 Industrial Park Rd. Unit 1, Vernon
- West Hartford Redemption Center, 695 Oakwood Ave., West Hartford
- CT Bottle & Can Return, 77 Pierson Lane #C, Windsor

Lynn Little, Three Veterans Redemption
Lynn writes testimony in opposition of the bill. She believes the issue of cross-border redemption lies with the distributors and the distributors could implement state-specific barcodes to prevent any misuse. Lynn explains the difficulty of proving containers redeemed in Connecticut were exclusively sold there and its impossibility without special labeling. She feels by decreasing the deposit to 5 cents, this risks the volume of redemption centers. Lynn advocates for an increase in enforcement against over-redemption and accountability for distributors, urging the state to compel compliance for this bill to function effectively.

Ritesh Shah, Owner, Bottle Collect
Ritesh submits testimony in opposition, arguing that cutting the refund value would discourage returns, lower redemption volumes, and financially harm small, independent redemption centers throughout the state who rely on that steady customer participation to cover costs. Ritesh believes this bill risks the viability of local businesses and undermines the effectiveness of the state's bottle system.

Julianna Laure, Chapter Organizer, Sierra Club Connecticut
Julianna views this bill will significantly set back the current state's bottle recycling program. She emphasizes that Connecticut already effectively reduces waste, keeps millions of containers out of landfills, and supports environmental initiatives through unclaimed deposits. The Sierra Club prefers for Connecticut to focus on enforcing existing laws, specifically cross-border redemption fraud.

Mike Noel, Director of Public Affairs, TOMRA
Mike writes in opposition arguing that reducing the refund value from 10 cents to 5 would undermine the current bottle program and discourage further recycling, increase litter, and raise waste disposal costs. He cites since 2021, the program has doubled redemption locations, supported many jobs, and diverted countless containers from being dumped in landfills. Mike proposes the possibility of using stronger enforcement, auditing free-riders, and a bottle bill security task force to monitor the issue of cross-border redemption, rather than weakening the incentives of bottle recycling.

Madison Spremulli, Communication Director, Connecticut Coalition for Economic & Environmental Justice
Madison writes testimony in opposition of the bill, sharing how this bill potentially reverses the state's bottle recycling program, which she believes currently is successful. She believes this bill does not address the current issue facing redemption rates and references the E-Cert Public Act 26-2.

The Following Individuals also submitted testimony in opposition to SB 516
Maria Vargas
Marcus Adebayo
Jamal King
Amber Schmidt