

NEWS RELEASE

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(5 pages)

SEVENTY-FIVE BOTTLE REDEMPTION BUSINESSES AND DISTRIBUTORS CALL ON GOVERNOR HOCHUL TO EXPAND AND MODERNIZE NY'S BOTTLE DEPOSIT LAW

BUSINESSES JOIN 160 COMMUNITY GROUPS IN SUPPORT OF A "BIGGER BETTER BOTTLE BILL" IN THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Seventy-five bottle redemption businesses, recycling companies, and alcohol distributors today called on Governor Hochul to modernize New York's landmark recycling law, commonly known as the "Bottle Bill." They joined 160 environmental, civic, and community organizations that have released last month a letter to Governor Kathy Hochul highlighting the successes of the four-decade-old law and urging measures to strengthen it. Both efforts support the inclusion of a "Bigger, Better Bottle Bill" in the upcoming Executive Budget. The groups' proposal urges that the updated program should aid businesses, increase recycling, create jobs, and extend the life of municipal landfills.

Specifically, the groups called for two important changes to modernize the Bottle Bill:

- **Expand the types and number of beverage containers covered by the Bottle Bill.** Other states from Maine to California include a diverse range of non-carbonated beverages, wine, and liquor to great success. Currently, many redemption centers struggle with items that are brought in that consumers believe are redeemable, but are not.
- **Increase the amount of the deposit to a dime** and increase the handling fee that businesses are paid for collecting containers. The increased deposit would provide an essential lifeline to redemption centers struggling to stay in the black. When the Bottle Bill was originally passed in 1982, the state minimum wage was \$3.82. By the end of the year 2021, the state minimum wage in upstate will increase to \$13.20, with \$15 being the minimum in the rest of the state. States like Michigan and Oregon that have dime deposits have seen increases in recycling and container redemption rates.

First approved forty years ago (1982), the New York State Returnable Container Act requires a 5-cent refundable deposit on covered beverage containers. The Act requires retailers who sell such covered beverages to accept returns of empty containers for the products they sell and refund the deposits. The Bottle Bill was last expanded ten years ago to include water bottles to the list that includes beer, soda, and wine cooler containers.

States that have a bottle deposit are 46% more likely to recycle PET plastic bottles than states that do not. Not only would the expansion of the state's Bottle Bill increase recycling rates and

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make New York's environment and communities cleaner, it would also help municipal recycling programs that are currently facing a recycling crisis. Over its 40-year history, the businesses say, New York's Bottle Bill has proven highly effective at reducing litter and increasing recycling rates. In 2020, New York's redemption rate was at 64%. The Bottle Bill reduces roadside container litter by 70%, and in 2020, 5.5 billion containers were recycled in the state. Advocates say the time to expand and modernize the law is long overdue.

The Bottle Bill has been an economic boon for New York. Since its passage, the bill has created at least 4,300 jobs in the state. Adding containers and increasing the deposit will create an additional 4,145 new jobs and benefit redemption center workers. Investing a portion of the additional revenues collected by the state to ensure better and more uniform compliance and expanded access to redemption opportunities will enhance equity and allow currently underserved communities to more fully benefit from this historically effective law.

"The success of the Bottle Bill speaks for itself. Bottle deposits drive some of the strongest recycling return rates in the nation, and can be a model for recycling other types of material. Whole communities of some of the most excluded New Yorkers rely on the deposits for income. Raising the deposit and expanding the Bill will not only take us to the next level in achieving critical waste diversion objectives in the face of the plastic crisis and climate change, but provide a real lifeline for the stigmatized freelance recyclers who keep our streets and communities clean," said **Ryan Castalia, Executive Director of Sure We Can in Brooklyn, NY.**

"In order to maintain the success of New York's Bottle bill, it is critical that the Bottle Bill be updated immediately to adapt to today's beverage consumption patterns and statewide economic conditions. Increasing the bottle deposit to 10 cents and expanding the containers covered under the bottle bill is long overdue and must be done so that New York can reclaim its status as the Environmental Policy Leader," said **Conrad Cutler, Founder and President of Galvanize Group of Elmsford, NY.**

"The data is clear, the Bottle Bill is a tremendous success. People are inspired to change their behavior and truly recycle because of the monetary incentive of the Bottle Bill," said **Martin Naro, CEO of Evtek.**

Contact:

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January 13, 2022

Kathy Hochul
Governor
Executive Chamber
Capitol Building
Albany, N.Y. 12234

Re: Modernizing New York’s Returnable Container Act (“Bottle Bill”)

Dear Governor Hochul,

The undersigned companies write to express our strong support for modernization of New York’s Returnable Container Act,¹ commonly known as the ‘Bottle Bill.’ Approved in 1982, the ‘Bottle Bill’ requires a 5-cent refundable deposit on eligible beverage containers to encourage their return to avoid litter and waste. It’s time to update the law to include popular non-carbonated beverages, wine, spirits, and hard cider. While expanding the types of beverages covered is necessary, it is also essential to increase the redeemable deposit value to 10-cents to increase the rate of recovery and ensure that redeemers have the ability to grow and prosper in a competitive economy. To do so fairly, New York also needs to make the program more convenient and equitable for all New Yorkers. Ahead of the program’s 40th anniversary, policymakers should modernize this effective program for the next 40 years so that it can grow New York’s “circular economy.”

We urge that you include a plan to modernize the Bottle Bill as part of your FY2022-23 executive budget.

Modernization of the 40-year-old Bottle Bill will further enhance litter control, help stimulate recycling efforts, stimulate local economies, and support local businesses struggling against inflation and increased costs to businesses.

After its four-decades of success, we believe that the Bottle Bill should be modernized. There are two important steps needed to modernize the law:

Expand the range of beverage containers covered by the Bottle Bill. New York would not be the first state to include non-carbonated beverages, wine, and liquor. Maine’s Bottle Deposit Law includes all containers covered in New York’s existing Bottle Bill plus wine, spirits, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages. Maine has a 5-cent deposit for all beverages, except wine and liquor, which have a 15-cent deposit. Other states with Bottle Deposit Laws that include non-carbonated beverages include California, Hawaii, and Oregon.²

Increase the amount of the deposit to a dime. The impact of the nickel deposit that was approved in 1982 has eroded over time. A mere inflation update would likely make that deposit nearly fifteen cents.³ And in order to ensure that those who wish to redeem their deposits can easily do so, we also recommend that a portion of the additional revenues collected by the state be used to ensure better compliance and enhance

¹ New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, “New York’s Bottle Bill,” <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8500.html>.

² National Coalition of State Legislatures, “State Beverage Container Deposit Laws,” March 13, 2020. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/state-beverage-container-laws.aspx>.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI Inflation Calculator, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

access to redemption entities. Michigan and Oregon have increased their deposit to 10 cents, leading to an increased recycling/redemption rates.⁴

New York's recycling system is superior to many others due to its curbside and redeemable container programs working in tandem. States that have a bottle deposit are 46% more likely to recycle PET plastic bottles than states that do not.⁵ Not only would the expansion of the state's Bottle Bill increase recycling rates and make New York's environment and communities cleaner, it would also help municipal recycling programs that are currently facing a recycling crisis.

Municipal recycling programs are particularly struggling with glass containers in their recycling streams. When glass breaks in curbside containers it can render much of the other materials unrecyclable for the municipality, or "contaminated". The expansion of the Bottle Bill to include wine, spirits, and hard cider would take a significant proportion of the containers that municipalities are struggling with off their hands.

Even when recyclable materials are not contaminated by broken glass, the costs of recycling containers that are not covered under the state's Bottle Bill are too high for many municipalities. For example, the costs associated with collecting and processing PET plastic bottles and glass per ton are higher than revenues per ton for scrap material.⁶ Expanding the Bottle Bill would reduce or eliminate these costs for municipal programs by creating a financial incentive (the deposit) for consumers to return containers and an obligation (the law) for retailers to accept these containers, relieving the burden on local government recycling programs.

Additionally, the increased deposit would provide an essential lifeline to redemption centers struggling to stay in the black. When the Bottle Bill was originally passed in 1982, the state minimum wage was \$3.82. By the end of the year 2021, the state minimum wage in upstate will increase to \$13.20, with \$15 being the minimum in the rest of the state.⁷ However, the state's bottle deposit, the main income stream for bottle redeemers, has remained stagnant over the past four decades. With businesses facing ever-increasing wages and rents, redemption centers face a major obstacle for growth.

The Bottle Bill has been an economic boon for New York. Since its passage, the bill has created at least 4,300 jobs in the state.⁸ Adding containers and increasing the deposit will create an additional 4,145 new jobs⁹ and benefit redemption center workers. Investing a portion of the additional revenues collected by the state to ensure better and more uniform compliance and expanded access to redemption opportunities will enhance equity and allow currently underserved communities to more fully benefit from this historically effective law.

We urge your support for this important environmental initiative. Including these Bottle Bill modernizations in your FY2022-23 Executive Budget will bolster the state's efforts to reduce litter, enhance recycling, create jobs, expand equity, and ease consumer participation. We look forward to working with you to ensure a cleaner environment.

⁴ Container Recycling Institute, "Redemption Rates of and Other Features of 10 U.S. State Deposit Programs," 2021.

⁵ Container Recycling Institute, "Container Deposits: The Rockstars of Recycling," <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/House%20Natural/Bills/H.175/Witness%20Documents/H.175~Susan%20Collins~Container%20Deposit%20Handout~2-24-2021.pdf>.

⁶ Container Recycling Institute, "Cost of Curbside Recycling for Beverage Containers," May 31, 2018, <http://www.container-recycling.org/index.php/publications>,

⁷ New York State Department of Labor, "New York State's Minimum Wage," <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-states-minimum-wage/new-york-states-minimum-wage>

⁸ Container Recycling Institute, "Bottle Bills Create Jobs," 2021.

⁹ Eunomia, "Employment and Economic Impact of Container Deposits- New York," March 6th, 2019.

Sincerely,

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A&A Redemption Center, Inc.
Abbott Bottle Return Inc.
ABOHAR INC
Albion Redemption Center
All Deposit of Long Island
Allegany Beverage & Redemption
Amir Holdings Inc
Arc Redemption Inc.
Astoria Beer Depot
Bag O Nickels
BC Can and Bottle Return
Belgoods LLC
Beverage Mart
Bodow Recycling Inc.
Bottle City NYC
BottleDrop Redemption Center
Bottles For The Brave
Brix Bulk Items
Bucks For Bottles
Buffalo's Best Bottle and Can Redemption
Camden Cans & Bottle Return
CHILANA INC
CK Bottles4Bucks, LLC
Community Beverage
Creating Change Redemption Center
Culver Narrows Thrifty Bev.
Cushman Cans
D&P Recycle Inc.
DIVRAJ Inc.
ECO Friendly
Elramida Holding Inc.
Erie Blvd W Returns LLC
Exchange Redemption Inc.
EZPZ
Flair Beverages Corp.
For Your Convenience
Gard Recycling, Inc

Green Bottle Redemption Center
Gursharan Inc.
HARNOOR Inc.
HARPRIYA Inc.
Honeywell Redemption Center
Invest Redemption Group LLC
Jamaica Beverage Center LLC
Jamaica redemption Center LLC
JASNOOR Inc.
JK's Redemption Center
JR Redemption Center Corp
JT Bottle Redemption
Long Island Bottles and Cans Inc.
Mahuana Inc.
McLean Beverage
Mega Beverage Redemption Center Inc.
Mohawk Redemption Center
Neighborhood Redemption Center Inc.
Nickels Redemption Center Inc.
Oneonta Redemption Center
Papa Cans Bottle Return
Pritej Inc .
Quick & Easy Bottle Returns Inc.
R & R Bottle and Can Redemption Center Inc.
RAJPREET Inc.
Recycle For Education
Ridge Nickelback
Righi Redemption Centers LLC
Roseadon Enterprises Inc.
SHARAN Inc.
SUKHRAJ Inc.
Sure We Can
TEJPAUL Inc.
The Environmental Recycling of NY
Vee Recycling Inc.
Vestal Beverage & Redemption Center
Vetrone's Redemption Center