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June 25, 2010

Honorable Senate President Colleen Hanabusa
Honorable Speaker Calvin K.Y. Say
Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Honorable Representative Hermina Morita, Chair of the House Energy and Environmental
Protection Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Hawaii HB 2239 -- Support Override of Governor's Veto

Honorable Mesdames Hanabusa and Morita and Messrs. Say and Gabbard,

On behalf of the Container Recycling Institute, we are writing **to express our support for HB 2239**, which would expand the state's existing beverage container recycling program to include dietary supplements, including energy drinks, such as Monster and Red Bull.

Hawaii's container deposit law has been a huge success, and is supported by a majority of residents, according to the public opinion poll conducted in 2008. However, it can be further improved by passing this legislation (HB 2239) to add energy drinks and dietary supplements to the law. These containers are often very similar to or the same as other drinks sold in containers that are subject to the law, and consumers are understandably confused about why one container bears a deposit and another doesn't. This bill would reduce confusion, both for consumers and redemption center operators.

Environmental Benefits of this Expansion

- In Hawaii, 22 million energy drinks are sold each year (CRI estimate for 2006), and these drinks are packaged in aluminum containers. An additional quantity of dietary supplements are sold each year, for which we do not have comprehensive data.
- The empty aluminum energy drink containers weigh approximately 316 tons. At the state's current recycling rate of nearly 80%, approximately 253 additional tons of aluminum would be recycled under this program each year.
- The scrap value of the 253 tons of aluminum, at today's price of \$1,744 per ton, is over \$440,000. Adding these containers to the existing program would therefore add over \$440,000 per year to Hawaii's economy, and without this expansion, \$440,000 worth of containers will likely be needlessly buried in Hawaii's landfills each year instead.
- Recycling 253 tons of aluminum each year saves the equivalent energy that would be used to power 516 homes for a year.

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Expanding the Law will Produce Other Benefits that Hawaii has Already Experienced with the Beverage Container Deposit Law

- Beverage container recycling saves energy, natural resources, and reduces the production of toxic chemical emissions in the manufacturing process. Recycling significantly diminishes all of the inputs needed to make the replacement product from virgin materials.
- With energy savings comes a reduction in greenhouse gas production and other toxic emissions.
- Other recycling programs address the need for recycling, but don't provide a mechanism to reduce litter. Container deposit laws place a value on beverage containers, which encourages the public to pick up the beverage containers and turn them in to receive the deposit refund. Otherwise, beverage container litter fouls the land, waterways and beaches of Hawaii, and ultimately becomes debris in the ocean and a hazard to sea life. These littered items add to the costs of local government, including costs to pick up litter and clean litter out of storm drains. Hawaii has already seen tremendous decreases in beverage container litter on beaches, and these improvements have been documented by the State.

CRI is a nonprofit organization that studies and promotes policies and programs that increase recovery and recycling of beverage containers, and shift the societal and environmental costs associated with manufacturing, recycling and disposal of container and packaging waste from government and taxpayers to producers and consumers. CRI has served for nearly 20 years as the only national clearinghouse for information on beverage container sales, recycling and wasting in the United States. CRI plays a vital national role in educating policy makers, government officials and the general public regarding the societal and environmental impacts of the production and disposal of beverage containers and the need for producers to take responsibility for their packaging.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding this measure. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Susan V. Collins
Executive Director
Container Recycling Institute

Cc: All Senators, Hawaii State Senate
All Representatives, Hawaii House of Representatives
Robert Harris, Esq., Hawaii Sierra Club