

NEWS RELEASE

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Environmental Group Challenges Soft Drink, Beer and Grocery Companies to ‘Come Clean’ on Prop1 Spending

CRI Discloses Spending in Vote “No” on Prop. 1 Campaign

Columbia, MO. (March 26, 2002) – Challenging soft drink, beer and grocery companies to release information on campaign spending to repeal the nation’s only local beverage deposit ordinance, CRI released information on the nonprofit group’s spending in the “No” on Prop. 1 campaign.

“Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Inc., Anheuser-Busch, HY VEE, Krogers and Schnucks are waging war on beverage containers deposit laws and bottle bill proposals across the nation. Make no mistake, the battle to repeal Columbia’s Deposit Ordinance is part of a national strategy, coordinated by leading industry trade associations – the National Soft Drink Association and the Grocery Manufacturers Association,” Pat Franklin, executive director of the Container Recycling Institute said today.

Based in Arlington, Virginia, the Container Recycling Institute is a national, non-profit environmental research and education organization that monitors industry practices regarding beverage packaging. CRI is also a national clearinghouse for information on ‘bottle bills’ in the United States.

“CRI took the unprecedented step of committing to fight the repeal effort in Columbia because the battle here has national implications. If the food and beverage industry succeed in repealing Columbia’s deposit ordinance, then they will intensify efforts to repeal laws in Iowa, New York, Massachusetts and elsewhere,” CRI Senior Policy Analyst Lance King said.

“We challenge the National Soft Drink Association and its leading members – Coke and Pepsi – to come clean about spending on telephone polling designed to convince voters to vote for the repeal of deposits. We challenge Schnucks to come clean about using employee time to push repeal flyers on grocery customers,” Franklin said.

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Releasing copies of CRI's "Non-Committee Expenditure Report", the group told news media today that it reported a total of \$4,736.32 in direct expenditures – primarily on staff, consulting and advertising expenses through March 22, 2002. In addition, CRI has contributed \$1,000 to Columbians Against Throwaways.

"We estimate that beverage and food industry supporters of Prop. 1 will spend more than \$100,000 on direct campaign expenses, including television, newspaper and radio advertisements, plus unreported expenses such as consultants like Professor Robb, opinion polling and voter persuasion calls," King said.

Primary support for the "No" on Prop 1 campaign comes from more than 500 members of Columbians Against Throwaways, CRI members and a small advertising grant.

"The Container Recycling Institute is primarily funded by grants from private foundations and individuals. We received a \$5,000 grant from the non-profit Florence Fund in Washington, D.C. to inform and educate voters in Columbia about the adverse impacts that would result from repealing the 5-cent deposit on bottles and cans," Franklin said.

Missouri Ethics Law requires non-committee financial disclosures every 48 hours immediately prior to an election.

"Coke, Pepsi, Anheuser-Busch and grocers have waged a 30-year war on beverage container deposit laws," King said. "They have spent hundreds of millions of dollars evading responsibility for their bottle and can waste."

Dwight Reed, president of the National Soft Drink Association in 1980, said "Society is telling us in unmistakable terms that we share equally with the public, the responsibility for package retrieval and disposal....This industry has spent hundreds of millions of dollars... in the attempt to dispute, deflect, or evade this message....It is interesting to speculate on the state of our public image, and our political fortunes has that sum been devoted to disposal or retrieval technology."

CRI will be releasing additional information later on industry spending practices.

"Deposit laws achieve higher recycling rates than any public or private policy developed for recycling in the last 30 years, an average 78 percent recycling rate in Columbia and the 10 states that have deposit systems," Franklin said.

"Don't be fooled! A vote for Prop. 1 is a vote for litter and waste. The beverage and grocery companies are all for recycling, if taxpayers foot the bill. At a minimum, passage of Prop. 1 would lead to a 50 percent drop in recycling of bottles and cans in Columbia, millions more littered beverage containers, and higher taxes to pay for litter clean-up and landfill disposal. CRI urges Columbians to vote 'No' on Prop. 1, April 2nd," King said.

For more information on deposit systems, visit the CRI websites on the Internet:

www.container-recycling.org or www.bottlebill.org