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EDITORIAL

## 'Bottle bill' opponents want to confuse us

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Beware of those who seek to put off implementation of the so-called bottle bill in hopes that a new Legislature might repeal the act.

They say Hawai'i won't be ready when the law goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2005. That's nearly eight months away and, look, it's hardly rocket science.

Under the law passed in 2002, which exempts mom-and-pop stores, the price of each beverage container made of glass, aluminum, plastic or other materials would include a 6-cent redemption fee.

When you're done with the container, you return it to an independent certified redemption center, or perhaps even the store, and get a 5-cent refund. The extra penny pays to run the system.

As for the inconvenience of setting up redemption centers, the law lets the retailers off the hook and depends on recycling companies to establish the centers. Nor do retailers have to be responsible for collecting the containers and refunding the deposits, unless they choose to for business purposes.

That said, the bottle bill will undoubtedly add some cost and inconvenience for the retailers. For example, to keep its competitive edge, a supermarket might feel forced to add a redemption center to its facility. But that's a business choice.

Also, bars selling bottles of beer will be paying the redemption cost up-front, and will have to arrange to get the money back, either from the collector or redemption center, or by charging the customer an extra nickel.

Beverage industry reps have complained that bars and restaurants don't have the space to store the bottles. But as it is, those businesses already recycle, and as a result, their containers are collected on a daily basis.

The bottom line is, the bottle redemption system is coming to Hawai'i, so we may as well get prepared. Plans for dozens of redemption centers are already in the works.

Let's go with the flow rather than resist the inevitable changes that must occur to stem the flow of trash to our shrinking landfills.