

Albany Times Union

An unseen benefit to bottle law

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The battle for a bigger, better bottle law has been raging for years now.

Environmentalists have been pushing for additional beverage deposits and want unclaimed deposits returned to the state. The beverage industry, which currently keeps the unclaimed deposits, has been aggressively fighting it.

Women everywhere might have one more reason to push for more deposits.

Pat Franklin, executive director of the Container Recycling Institute, drove up to Albany from Virginia to lobby for the law. Franklin couldn't be immediately reached Friday, but according to a staffer with the New York Public Interest Research Group, she had this experience in Albany:

On her way to a strategy session, Franklin had difficulty finding a parking spot (surprise) and in the process of moving her car a few times left her pocketbook on the sidewalk.

When she got to the meeting, the lobbyist realized it was missing and spent the rest of the day filling out police reports and canceling her credit cards.

But the story has a happy ending: Someone found her purse, with all but the cash intact. The finder: a trash-picker looking for nickel deposit bottles.

Report card on legislators

Speaking of the bottle law, environmentalists plan today to announce a new report card for legislators that goes beyond their voting records.

EPL/Environmental Advocates was keeping the specifics under wraps, but said the idea is to hold lawmakers accountable, including leaders who can influence whether legislation gets to the floor for a vote or dies in committee.

The group plans a new tracking system involving five key laws, or "Super Bills." The full list wasn't available, but an insider familiar with the plan said the bottle law is among the top five.