4361 Keystone Ave. • Culver City, CA 90232

 (310) 559-7451

www.container-recycling.org

www.bottlebill.org

June 22, 2020

Senator Rebecca Rausch

Chairwoman

24 Beacon St.

Room 218

Boston, MA 02133

Carolyn Dykema

Chairwoman

24 Beacon St.

Room 473F

Boston, MA 02133

RE: S.568 – Resolve providing for an investigation and study of enhancing statewide recycling programs – OPPOSE

*By email:* *JointCommittee.Environment@malegislature.gov*

Dear Chairwoman Rausch and Chairwoman Dykema and members of the Committee:

CRI applauds the concern the author and the legislature has given to the concept of improving recycling I the Commonwealth. Proper recycling infrastructure is key to a circular economy, reducing greenhouse gases, saving energy, creating local jobs, enhancing economic development, and in the case of bottle bills, reducing litter.

However, **we are writing in opposition to the part of the resolve that suggests studying repeal of the container deposit law.** The effectiveness ofcontainer deposit lawshas been studied many times, both within and outside of the United States. These studies repeatedly report that container deposit laws achieve recycling rates that are two to four times as high as recycling programs that do not include container deposits.

**Instead of considering repeal, we recommend that the Commonwealth take steps to modernize its bottle deposit program:**

Modernizing the deposit system has been done successfully in other U.S. states. As Figure 1 shows, higher deposit values (10¢ or mixed deposit values) **combined with** placing deposits on a broader range of beverages (as in ME, OR, CA, and HI) results in higher overall recycling “capture rates” than in states with nickel refund values and deposits on fewer beverage types. Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont currently lag behind other deposit states in terms of how many beverage containers are captured (recycled) as a proportion of those sold. Due to this, Connecticut successfully passed a modernization bill earlier this month, and Vermont passed a modernization bill through the House this year which will be heard by the Senate in January.

**Successful modernization in North America: more beverages, higher deposit values**

Opponents of modernizing Massachusetts’ deposit system argue that raising the deposit value to a dime and extending that dime to non-carbonated beverages would hurt consumers financially and would lead to decreased beverage sales. Neither of those arguments hold water (pardon the pun). Massachusetts’ neighbors and states with similar demographics have made one or both moves with success, as Table 1 shows.

This month, **Connecticut’s** governor signed into law a modernization bill that will expand that state’s container deposit law to include all non-carbonated beverages and will increase the deposit to ten cents.



**New York** successfully added water bottles to their deposit system in 2009. Their redemption rate with the current nickel deposit is 64%; they, too, would benefit from a dime deposit.

**Maine** has a deposit law that covers all beverages except for milk and dairy alternatives, and has an estimated redemption rate of 84%.[[1]](#endnote-1) Maine’s deposit law is highly popular with Mainers.

*“The Bottle Bill isn’t just Maine’s biggest recycling success story—it’s a part of our culture. Many of our municipalities rely on the bottle redemption program to help them manage their municipal solid waste, and hundreds of Mainers have built their lives and businesses around the existing bottle redemption law.”*

***- Natural Resources Council of Maine***

**Oregon’s** deposit law is the nation’s oldest, and it too suffered from the declining value of a nickel. As redemption rates began to fall in the mid-2000s, the state passed a law requiring the deposit to go to a dime if a recycling rate of 80% could not be sustained for two consecutive years. These conditions were met, so the 10¢ deposit was introduced in late 2017. 2018 also saw the expansion of the bottle bill to all non-alcoholic non-carbonated beverages. The success of these two changes is unmistakable: the overall redemption rate has risen from **64%** in 2016 to **86%** in 2019.

**Quebec** has had a deposit system on carbonated beverages in place since 1984, and currently enjoys a 74% return rate with mixed deposit values: most containers have a deposit value of 5¢, while it is 10¢ for refillable beer bottles, and 20¢ for larger containers (>450 ml). In late 2022, the system will be expanded to include sparkling water, juice, wine and spirits, and other non-carbonated beverages. At the same time, the deposit value will increase to 25¢ for wine and spirits bottles, and 10¢ for all other beverage containers.[[2]](#endnote-2)

**British Columbia:** InBC’s deposit program**,** all ready-to-serve beverages—including milk and dairy alternatives—are covered by deposits. Most containers had a 5¢ deposit until October 2020; now all beverages are subject to a 10¢ deposit. The 2018 overall redemption rates were 89% for beer and hard cider, and 81% for everything else.[[3]](#endnote-3)

**Alberta** has one of the most modernized deposit systems in North America. Like British Columbia, it includes all sealed ready-to-serve beverages, including milk and dairy alternatives. Even better, it has a two-tier deposit value of 10¢ and 25¢ based on container size, and had an **85%** redemption rate in 2019.[[4]](#endnote-4)

**The high** **quality container materials** recovered in these deposit states and provinces have strong economic markets. Because they do not pass through a MRF combined with other many other materials collected through single-stream recycling programs, they are not contaminated; they can be made into new aluminum cans, new glass bottles and fiberglass, and new plastic bottles and fiber products. They fetch a higher market price, and are not downcycled into road base, aggregate, or daily landfill cover.

**In conclusion,** the bottle bill is Massachusetts’ most successful recycling program. While it’s 43% redemption rate is low compared to other container deposit states’, it is nearly double that of the 22% collection rate of the state’s curbside recycling. Updating Massachusetts’ deposit law to include non-carbonated beverages, and to have a 10¢ deposit, would help secure Massachusetts’ position as a recycling leader.

Please let me know if you have any questions about CRI’s opposition to S.568.

Sincerely, 

Susan Collins

President

Container Recycling Institute

*Celebrating 30 Years of Research, Education and Advocacy (1991-2021)*

***About the Container Recycling Institute:*** *CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging.*

1. Letter from Newell Augur, Maine Beverage Association, to Maine State Sen. Tom Saviello and State Rep. Ralph Tucker, Jan. 18, 2018. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Who Pays What: an Analysis of Beverage Container Collection and Costs in Canada.” CM Consulting, Nov. 2020. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. "Encorp Pacific 2018 Annual Report." Encorp Pacific, 2018;  "BRCCC’s 2019 Annual Report to the Ministry (covers 2018 calendar year)." BC Brewers’ Recycled Container Collection Council (BRCCC), 2018. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. "Global Deposit Book 2020: An Overview of Deposit Systems for One-Way Beverage Containers." Reloop Inc. Dec. 15, 2020. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)