

May 13, 2025

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: House Bill 6205 (Bennett) – Oppose – Coalition for High Performance Recycling

Dear Chair Bennett and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony **opposing H 6205**, a bill focused solely on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging that does not adequately address beverage container recycling. The Coalition for High Performance Recycling (CHPR) represents a unique alliance of environmental nonprofits, material manufacturers, packaging suppliers, trade associations, and beverage companies, including brands such as Poland Springs, Primo, Red Bull, and Niagara Bottling. We have a substantial presence both nationally and internationally, with our products and packaging composing many of the items that Rhode Islanders sell, buy, and enjoy. We believe that reducing litter and achieving efficient recycling can only occur through a system combining EPR with a modern Bottle Bill, also known as a Deposit Return System (DRS).

The concept of a Bottle Bill is not new to Rhode Island; however, previous iterations of this legislation were premised on 1970s-style systems. The deposit return systems in Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut are not the systems promoted by CHPR; instead, we advocate for deposit return systems that (among other things) utilize modern technologies to ensure convenience and efficiency, are designed and run an industry-funded nonprofit entity with government oversight, provide measures for accountability, and ensure all revenue generated by the bottle bill system goes toward bottle bill system operations and improvement. Oregon and Maine are models for this, boasting typical beverage redemption rates of 75% and 90%, respectively. The recycling rate in Rhode Island is 26% despite 80% of households having access. This disconnect is due to contamination from mixed materials and food residue, as well as limited consumer participation. An EPR-only system that only focuses on residential collection struggles to deliver the high-quality and clean material needed to make new containers since everything is collected in a single stream. Importantly, an EPR-only bill also does nothing to address litter. An EPR plus a bottle deposit system will address these problems. The combined systems allow beverage products to remain in a dedicated recycling stream while incentivizing the consumer to participate. This will not only dramatically reduce litter but also help with the capacity constraints of Rhode Island's landfill. Both of these are important to Rhode Islanders since 85% of registered Rhode Island voters in a February 2025 poll said that litter and waste on Rhode Island shorelines and in the ocean are of concern to them, and 73% reported being concerned that the only landfill in the state is nearing capacity.

We all want recycling to improve, and recognize that the system needs assistance to do that. EPR, essentially, models what currently exists in Rhode Island; it expands access, education, and accepted products as well as shifts the cost model, but it does not capture products outside of the household or

meaningfully address the lack of participation or contamination. We cannot support H 6205 for all these reasons, but welcome a conversation on what may be expected with a joint EPR/Bottle Bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Coalition for High Performance Recycling

CHPR MEMBERS

CHPR is proud to be supported by leading brands, companies, nonprofits, and organizations committed to advancing high-performance recycling, including:

Washington Wine Institute
Tri-Arrows Aluminum
TOMRA
The Recycling Partnership
The Association of Plastic Recyclers
The Aluminum Association
Suntory Global Spirits
Reloop Platform
Red Bull North America
Primo Brands
Novelis
Niagara Bottling
New Belgium Brewing Company
International Bottled Water Association
Indorama Ventures North America
Glass Packaging Institute
Diageo North America
Constellium N.V.
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Can Manufacturers Institute
Ball Corporation
Arconic Corporation

