



Scott Cassel
Chief Executive Officer/Founder

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House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island State House, House Lounge
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H6205, Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Paper Act

Dear Chair Bennett, First Vice Chair Phillips, Second Vice Chair Carson, and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of **H6205**, the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Paper Act, which would establish an extended producer responsibility (EPR) program for recycling in the state.

H6205 establishes clear roles and responsibilities for program participants related to stewardship plans, reporting requirements, public outreach and education, and enforcement. The bill also contains other best practices for packaging EPR policies, including an eco-modulated fee structure that incentivizes the transition to more sustainable packaging, a comprehensive needs assessment, and a harmonized statewide education and outreach program. H6205 also includes an advisory council that will provide an ongoing forum for meaningful multi-stakeholder input into the program.

Although PSI supports H6205, we must acknowledge that H6205 requires the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to play a significant role in the oversight and implementation of the program. Therefore, to ensure adequate funding for DEM staffing to oversee the program, PSI recommends that H6205 explicitly allocate funding for DEM to acquire new staff to oversee and implement this program.

For decades, local governments in Rhode Island have assumed the primary responsibility for the financial and managerial burden of handling the millions of tons of packaging waste generated in the state each year. They face decisions about how to budget for increasing and fluctuating prices based on international markets for recycled materials. Currently, they cannot control the

types of materials used by consumer brands for their packaging, which becomes a local government responsibility to manage, no matter how unrecyclable that material might be.

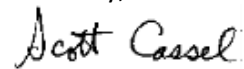
H6205 will provide crucial funding from producers to ***relieve municipalities of the financial burdens*** they currently face in operating recycling programs. This funding will ***create local jobs and stimulate local industries*** such as recycling facilities and material processors. H6205 will ***create transparency of recycling processes and costs***, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, ***and provide significant infrastructure and market development investments*** to further Rhode Island's transition to a circular economy.

Packaging EPR programs have been successfully operating for over 35 years across Europe and in Asia, and over 15 years in eight Canadian provinces. These laws have been proven to increase recycling rates in these countries and provinces and have provided sustainable funding for investments to bolster existing infrastructure and ongoing operations. Six states – Colorado, Oregon, California, Maine, Maryland, and Minnesota – have enacted EPR for packaging laws, and over a dozen other states have introduced bills in the past two years. Rhode Island already has EPR laws for mercury switches, electronics, mercury thermostats, paint, mattresses, and fluorescent lamps. Some of these programs have been successfully operating for more than a decade with sustainable funding from producers, providing accessible and convenient collection options for Rhode Island residents and boosting recycling and safe end-of-life disposal.

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national policy expert and consulting nonprofit that pioneered product stewardship in the United States along with our members – hundreds of state and local government officials, including many in Rhode Island – and our partners from companies, environmental groups, academia, and international governments. Since 2000, PSI's facilitated dialogues, research, pilot projects, and policy models have helped shape most of the 142 EPR laws enacted for 20 industry sectors in 33 states, including Rhode Island's EPR laws.

I respectfully urge you to **support H6205** for the financial and environmental health of Rhode Island's communities and economy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (617) 513-3954, or Scott@ProductStewardship.US.

Sincerely,



Scott Cassel
Chief Executive Officer/Founder