



May 9, 2025

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dave's Fresh Marketplace RI Bottle Bill Testimony

Dave's Fresh Marketplace is proud to be Rhode Island's largest locally owned and operated independent grocer, since 1969.

During difficult times, like during COVID-19, we worked tirelessly to keep our prices reasonable – working closely with local vendors, farms, wholesalers...and for a while, even the local colleges as we worked to procure their paper goods inventory. Over the past 5 years, our customers and neighbors have alternately struggled with inflation, rising interest rates and turbulent tariffs. Anxiety is running rampant. Families are struggling.

We are very concerned about two pieces of legislation (H-6206 and H-6207) which would impose a \$.10 fee on nearly every beverage sold in our store. We **strongly support efforts** to *increase* recycling and have implemented numerous recycling programs in our own stores, but we are concerned that this legislation will raise prices for our stores and our customers.

Bottled beverages are one of our best-selling product categories. Be it waters, sodas, teas, or juice drinks, customers snap these items up every week. While a \$.10 redemption fee per bottle might not seem like much, the cost really adds up when purchasing a case. A 12-pack of soda will go up by \$1.20 and a standard 24-pack of water will go up by \$2.40. That adds up to real money over the course of weeks and months of purchasing these popular beverage products.

Inflation is already impacting our customers, and this legislation would create artificially higher costs at a time when prices are already high.

Dave's believes that there are better ways to reduce litter in our community than a new bottle deposit fee, including proposals being considered in the General Assembly this year. In other states retailers and distributors have come together to support complementary programs to existing curbside recycling efforts and have helped to increase recycling rates without added costs to end customers.

Dave's Fresh Marketplace and local grocers stand ready to work with our customers to help improve recycling and keep our beautiful state free of litter. We do not believe that imposing a

\$.10 bottle deposit fee is the right way to do this, and that is why we urge you to oppose H-6206 and H-6207 and instead adopt legislation creating a model EPR system in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan Budlong".

Susan Budlong

Director of Communications

Dave's Fresh Marketplace

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