

## Lou Mansolillo

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**From:** Alicia Lehrer <alehrer@wrwc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:06 AM  
**To:** House Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of H6207

Dear Committee Clerk Louis Mansolillo,

Below is my testimony in support of H6207.

I am concerned about the intertwined problems of litter and waste. A bottle bill is a proven policy solution that addresses both of these issues.

For over a year, a bipartisan study commission brought in experts from across the country, examined our state's recycling and waste systems, and listened to local stakeholders. The results are clear - recycling refund programs work. In fact, the Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study found significantly less litter in states with bottle bills than in states without one.

My organization, the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC), is the steward of the Woonasquatucket River that flows through the communities of Glocester, North Smithfield, Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston and Providence. Our River Ranger team cares for the river and its seven mile Greenway, a multi-use trail connecting public park spaces in Providence, Johnston, and Smithfield. River Rangers collect litter on land and in the water at our floating litter collection unit in Providence on a weekly basis. In 2024 alone, they collected 300 yards of litter from the Greenway and 315 pounds of trash and recycling directly from the river. 85% of what we collected were recyclable bottles. When you think about how the weight of one empty plastic bottle, 315 pounds amounts to an enormous number of recyclable drink bottles. Nips are the biggest problem. They are everywhere! If every nip were worth \$0.10, they would become a commodity, and our River Rangers would spend a lot less time picking up and recycling trash and more time creating public amenities such as park benches, pollinator gardens, native plantings, and public art. We beg you to pass H6207 once and for all!

H6207 creates a recycling refund system as well as an extended producer responsibility program that incentivizes major brands to develop product packaging that is easier to recycle. It's important that a recycling refund system be included because these programs:

- Capture a higher percentage of cans and bottles for recycling than curbside recycling alone
- Reduce the amount of litter in communities
- Reduce the amount of waste sent for disposal (in our case, to the landfill).

A bottle bill is good for the environment, good for the local economy, and popular! Please support H6207. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Alicia J. Lehrer  
Executive Director  
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

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