

Lou Mansolillo

From: Isabella DeFrancesco <idefrancesco@surfrider.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 3:03 PM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: mcentee@rilegislature.gov
Subject: Testimony for H6207- Surfrider Foundation

On Behalf of the Surfrider Foundation Rhode Island Chapter

Dear Chairwoman Bennett, Vice Chairs McNamara and Speakman, and Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Isabella DeFrancesco, and I serve as the Northeast Regional Manager for the Surfrider Foundation. I am also here representing the Surfrider Foundation's Rhode Island Chapter and its dedicated network of volunteers, ocean lovers, and community advocates.

As an environmental nonprofit committed to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches, the Surfrider Foundation sees firsthand the impacts of single-use packaging waste on our coasts and marine ecosystems. Year after year, our beach cleanups across Rhode Island reveal the same persistent items: plastic bottles, food wrappers, containers, and other forms of packaging that never truly go away. This is not a litter problem—it's a system problem.

H6207 addresses this systemic issue by shifting responsibility for the environmental and economic costs of packaging waste from municipalities and taxpayers to the producers who place these materials into our economy. This is not only fair, but essential if we are to create a circular economy where materials are designed for recovery, not disposal.

This bill will align Rhode Island with a growing movement of states, including California, Oregon, and Colorado, that are implementing EPR legislation to create sustainable packaging systems.

We are also encouraged by the bill's inclusion of a deposit-return system for beverage containers—a proven tool to boost recycling and reduce litter. These systems have long been effective in keeping bottles and cans out of our waterways and should be a central part of any comprehensive waste strategy.

The Surfrider Foundation urges this committee to pass H6207 and demonstrate Rhode Island's leadership in solving the plastic pollution crisis. Our coastal communities, marine life, and future generations depend on decisive action.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to provide further information or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Isabella DeFrancesco
Northeast Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation Rhode Island Chapter

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