

May 13, 2025

The Honorable David Bennett, Chairman
House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
The State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Opposition to House Bill 6206 and House Bill 6207

Brigido's Fresh Market has served customers in Northern Rhode Island for more than 80 years. Today, we operate three markets in North Scituate, Pascoag, and Slatersville. We have succeeded as a family-run business all of these years because we listen to our customers and provide them with the groceries they need at a reasonable price.

As everyone knows from shopping for themselves over the past few years, inflation has caused the cost of most grocery items to go up. Believe me, we hear from our customers about these price increases and we do everything that we can to moderate them, and offer the families we serve fair, reasonable prices.

Customers still get a bit of sticker shock looking at their grocery bills when compared to a few years ago. We have a customer suggestion box, in which the number one issue is pricing. They are not even aware of the possible bottle bill. That is why we are opposed to the introduction of a deposit system, which would impose a \$.10 bottle deposit fee on the vast majority of canned and bottled beverages sold in our stores. Some may argue that this isn't much money, but a \$.10 per bottle deposit fee will cause the price of a 12-pack of soda to go up by \$1.20 and a 24-pack of bottled water to go up by \$2.40. Many of our customers are on tight grocery budgets, and this bottle deposit fee will be a real burden for them.

Rhode Island's current curbside recycling system is easy and convenient. Forcing people to redeem deposits at bottle redemption centers will prove unpopular, especially for seniors and those with mobility issues.

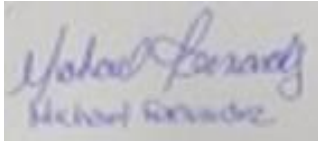
Brigido's is committed to recycling. It's good for our business and for the environment. Indeed, we have implemented a number of recycling programs in our stores, and have hosted a number of recycling drives for old/unwanted electronics and textile goods.

We agree that Rhode Island should continue working on improving our recycling rate, but we do not believe a bottle tax, that will increase costs for our customers, is the way to go. Instead, we

are confident that there are other models that have been introduced and accepted in recent years in other states that should be strongly considered.

Let's not raise prices on nearly every beverage that Rhode Islanders buy every week when they visit the grocery store. Please oppose a deposit system that increases costs and does not increase Rhode Island's recycling rate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael Fernandez", with a second line of text below it that is partially obscured but appears to be "Michael Fernandez".

Michael Fernandez
Brigido's Fresh Market