

Lou Mansolillo

From: Stop The RI Bottle Tax <info@stoptheribottletax.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:20 AM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: EastSide Mart: H-6207

Good afternoon,

My name is Paul Smith, and I own a convenience store in Providence called EastSide Mart. I am here today to ask each of you to oppose H-6207 because it would make it harder for my business to stay open.

Like many convenience stores, EastSide Mart has served as a neighborhood staple by offering everyday products for low prices. We are proud of what we provide for our neighborhood. Many of my customers are students, seniors and low-income families who rely on affordable prices. The 10-cent deposit fee on every can and bottle would be a steep price increase for my customers – particularly for a 12- or 24-pack of water, soft drinks, beer and so much more. These are families who are already facing increasing prices at the grocery store. Adding even more costs would threaten our way of doing business and put us and our employees at risk.

The reality is that many of my customers lack the time in their busy schedules or the means to travel to redemption centers to redeem their containers. They would be forced to just eat the cost. H-6207 isn't an incentive to recycle, it's a tax on those who can least afford it.

As local business owners, we do everything we can to support our staff and keep our store afloat. We're up early and we work late to be there for our community and our customers. It's upsetting that the General Assembly is considering a new bottle deposit system that would impact so many of us, particularly when there are ways to improve recycling that do not add new costs to all Rhode Islanders, whether they're shopping at one of our stores or they own a business.

I urge you to oppose H-6207 and any legislation that would add a new costly bottle deposit system. Please stand with our customers and my fellow business owners that are just looking to rebound after a tough few years.

Thank you for your time.

Paul Smith
EastSide Mart
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