



**Testimony of Sam Tracy in support of H. 6207:
Combined: Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Paper Act &
Beverage Containers Recycling Act**

House Environment and Natural Resources Committee

May 13, 2025

Chair Bennett and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H. 6207, which would create both a Deposit Return System (DRS), more commonly known as a “Bottle Bill,” for empty beverage containers as well as an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for packaging. Passage of H. 6207 would make Rhode Island the 11th state to adopt a Bottle Bill and the 8th state legislature to pass EPR for packaging.¹

Notably, this bill would make Rhode Island the first state to pass a Bottle Bill & packaging EPR as a single unit. This would be a major win for the environment, as **these programs work best together**.

Bottle Bills are the gold standard for beverage container litter reduction and recycling, with decades of data demonstrating their effectiveness at these important goals. Packaging EPR is then an excellent way to address other types of packaging by shifting the costs onto the producers rather than municipalities. These two programs work hand in hand.

While no states have passed them in a single bill before, the first two states to pass packaging EPR — Maine and Oregon — had thriving Bottle Bills already in place, and designed packaging EPR as a supplement to those programs, not a replacement.

This combination bill is the best approach to tackle the issues considered by the Rhode Island Plastic Bottle Waste Commission, which CLYNK was happy to participate in. We greatly appreciate the Commission’s work during that process, and agree with its recommendations that Rhode Island adopt both a Bottle Bill and Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging.

¹ Maine, Oregon, California, Colorado, and Minnesota have packaging EPR laws in place, while Maryland and Washington recently passed packaging EPR bills that are currently on their governors’ desks.

Bottle Bills are effective.

Deposit Return Systems have now existed for over 50 years, and have proven to be incredibly effective at protecting the environment in a variety of ways.

Bottle Bills reduce litter.

There is no other policy that is as effective at reducing litter as Deposit Return Systems. This is because they establish a cost to littering, as throwing an empty bottle out of your car window effectively becomes throwing away money. Similarly, they attach a monetary value to picking up litter, turning empty drink containers into dimes just waiting to be redeemed.

In states with effective Deposit Return Systems, you rarely see empty drink containers littering roads or public spaces. When you do, they aren't there for long, because someone will come by to earn some money by picking them up.

Several studies on Bottle Bills' litter reduction effects have been published, with many showing reductions over 70 or even 80%.²

Bottle Bills dramatically increase recycling rates.

Along with the massive benefits in litter reduction come substantial increases in recycling rates. States without Deposit Return Systems only recycle about 24% of their beverage containers,³ while those with Deposit Return Systems typically recycle double or triple that amount.

Oregon, the best-performing Bottle Bill state after CLYNK helped establish its bag-drop program, boasts a recycling rate of 87%,⁴ and it's reasonable to expect that Rhode Island could match or even surpass that number with the right policy specifics. For additional context, the best-performing Deposit Return Systems in the world is Germany's, where 98% of drink containers are returned.⁵

Bottle Bills save natural resources and save money.

In addition to increasing recycling rates, Deposit Return Systems establish a new stream of recycling that is significantly cleaner than beverage containers recycled through curbside programs. When beverage containers are mixed into single-stream systems, they are often

² See this collection of studies, compiled by the Container Recycling Institute: <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/benefits-of-bottle-bills/litter-studies-in-bottle-bill-states>

³ See this report from Frontier Group: <https://frontiergroup.org/articles/power-nickel-bottle-bills-and-producer-responsibility/>

⁴ See data from the Container Recycling Institute: https://d12v9rtnomnebu.cloudfront.net/paychek/10_states_Redemption_Rates_080524.pdf

⁵ See Reloop's fact sheet: <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Fact-Sheet-Performance-22Sept2022.pdf>

too contaminated to be made into new drink containers, instead being “downcycled” into lower-value products like fleece clothing or park benches.

When beverage containers are returned through a Deposit Return Systems, they are clean and high-quality enough to be recycled into new beverage containers, creating a truly circular economy where both waste and the need for new materials are minimized. This has a positive impact on the environment, and brings cost savings as well.⁶

- Aluminum can be recycled using less than 5% of the energy to make a new can
- Plastic can be recycled using only two-thirds the energy as using raw materials
- Glass can be recycled using about 77% the energy to make new bottles

Bottle Bills create jobs and drive investment.

Beyond the cost savings for businesses, establishing a Deposit Return System will create thousands of jobs in Rhode Island. This program will create business opportunities in transportation, logistics, manufacturing, technology, and numerous other sectors. This will bring significant investment in facilities and equipment to handle the collection and processing of recycled material.

CLYNK would love to participate in the Deposit Return System proposed in this bill, likely acting as a bag-drop service provider to the Producer Responsibility Organization the bill would create. Doing so would require substantial investments and hiring across the state. There are numerous other companies in the recycling space who would be making similar investments in Rhode Island as a direct result of this bill passing.

Bottle Bills can be convenient.

Since most Bottle Bills are many decades old, there is sometimes a perception that returning bottles and cans is a slow, dirty, and cumbersome process. We’re happy to share that this is no longer the case.

CLYNK’s bag-drop system makes container redemption quick, easy, clean, and fun. That's why there are millions of satisfied bag-drop customers in Deposit Return System states.

To start, customers simply create an account online or over the phone, which they can then access using our smartphone app or a physical card.

They then fill a bag with their empty containers, and when that bag is full, attach a sticker with a unique QR code that’s linked to their account. This bag can be dropped at one of our

⁶ See data from the Environmental Protection Agency:
<https://archive.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/smm/wastewise/web/html/factoid.html>

sustainability stations, located conveniently near supermarkets or other retailers. This process takes less than 15 seconds and can easily be added onto other errands like a trip to the grocery store.



CLYNK customers dropping bags at one of our sustainability stations in Maine

Once a station is full, our team picks up the bags and brings them to our processing facility. Here, they are counted, credited to users' accounts, sorted, and processed into a form that can be used to make new drink containers. The bags are also recycled to make new CLYNK bags, which are 50% recycled content.

CLYNK users can see their deposit balance accumulate in their account, withdrawing the funds whenever they choose. Some make frequent withdrawals, while most like to build their balance until it reaches a meaningful amount, using it to cover the cost of a grocery run or make a special purchase.



An overview of how CLYNK works

We strive to make recycling easy for consumers and businesses alike, and would be dedicated to making sure Rhode Island's Deposit Return System runs as smoothly as possible. This will allow it to reach its full potential of reducing litter, increasing recycling, saving resources, and growing the economy.

Packaging EPR is an excellent supplement to Bottle Bills.

As I described above, Bottle Bills are the gold standard for reducing beverage container litter and ensuring that valuable materials are recycled back into their highest use. However, they only address drink containers, and not the numerous other types of plastic packaging on the market today. That's where packaging EPR comes in.

The packaging EPR program described in this bill would shift the costs of plastic waste onto the producers via a Producer Responsibility Organization, instead of the status quo where municipalities are responsible for the disposal of this significant source of waste. This would not only relieve municipal budgets, but would also encourage producers to minimize their products' packaging in order to reduce their costs.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Of course, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Tracy

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About CLYNK

CLYNK is a circular economy solutions provider. We make it easy for people and brands to do the right thing through our consumer-centric “bag-drop” technology solutions. Our technology is used in 5 of the 10 Bottle Bill states throughout the country, and dramatically reduces the time and effort required for consumers to redeem their empty containers. We make recycling quick, easy, clean, and fun.

CLYNK, founded 18 years ago, is the pioneer of bag-drop redemption, and has processed over 2.5 billion beverage containers. We have also enabled nearly \$5 million in donations to local charities through our CLYNK To Give program, where we support non-profits organizing bottle drive fundraisers.