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Representative David A. Bennett
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
State House, Room 203
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

May 27, 2026

Dear Chair Bennett and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Diageo, I write in support of HB 7911/SB 3012, legislation that would establish a comprehensive packaging recycling system in Rhode Island by combining Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging with Recycling Refunds for beverage containers.

Diageo is a global producer of distilled spirits and beer, with brands including Johnnie Walker, Bulleit, Crown Royal, Don Julio, Casamigos, Tanqueray, Captain Morgan, Smirnoff, and Guinness. Our business supports approximately 900 jobs in Rhode Island, generates approximately \$60 million in annual sales revenue for restaurants and bars in the state, and generates approximately \$3 million in annual alcohol excise tax revenue for the state government.

As Rhode Island considers how best to recycle packaging materials, the state has an opportunity to design a system that works better from the beginning. For beverage containers, that means including Recycling Refunds as part of a broader EPR framework. EPR can play an important role in improving recycling for packaging generally, but beverage containers present a distinct recovery challenge and a distinct opportunity.

For beverage containers, the combination of EPR and Recycling Refunds offers a more efficient and effective path than EPR alone. As companies work toward a system in which new beverage containers are made from recycled beverage containers, we encourage Rhode Island to include the policy tool best suited to achieving beverage-container circularity at scale. A well-designed Recycling Refunds system like the one proposed in HB 7911/SB 3012 would collect more beverage containers and thereby reduce litter, while also preserving the quality of the recovered glass, aluminum, and plastic so those materials could be returned to beverage packaging instead of diverted to lower-value uses.

Additionally, HB 7911/SB 3012 is meaningfully different from older bottle bill models. Importantly, the bill would not require retail locations to take back empty beverage containers. Instead, it would rely on a producer responsibility organization to develop convenient redemption options for consumers, avoiding burdens on retail stores, staff, and space.



Rhode Island should not have to choose between an EPR program and a high-performing beverage-container recovery system. The strongest approach is to integrate both. HB 7911/SB 3012 would do that by creating a comprehensive, producer-funded recycling framework for all packaging, while providing the dedicated recovery system beverage containers need to achieve the best results.

For these reasons, Diageo respectfully supports HB 7911/SB 3012 and thanks the committee for its consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Cassie Folk
Director, Government Relations