

Testimony in support of H7911: Extended Producer Responsibility and Recycling

Dr. Hans Scholl, 71 Fales Avenue, Barrington, RI 02806

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To Chair Bennett and the honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

I support the bill because it implements the most impactful of the recommendations that came out of the 18 months of work of the “Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study and Provide Recommendations to Protect our Environment and Natural Resources from Plastic Bottle Waste”. Finally, after years and years of introducing bottle bills that never passed, mainly because of persistent disinformation, lobbying and opposition of the packaging and beverage industries, we have comprehensively researched and evaluated recommendations of the Commission, and a chance to actually do something against polluting our land and waters, by passing H7911.

The bill is an iteration of last year’s 2025-H6207 and implements a deposit return system for bottles, as well as an extended producer responsibility program for packaging and paper products.

The deposit return system is modeled after solutions that already work well in other states, including Massachusetts and Connecticut, which have proven, much more effective recycling refund systems. As a result, high (up to 90%) beverage container recycling rates can be achieved, and plastic pollution from packaging can be greatly reduced.

The introduction of extended producer responsibility in H7911 will finally shift the cost of recycling programs from the municipalities to the producers, holding them accountable for the entire lifecycle of their products. This is overdue, because the manufacturers, who flood Rhode Island with their polluting bottles and packaging, have so far gotten away with evading their ultimate responsibility for this pollution, leaving the burden and cost of cleanup and recycling to the taxpayers. It is morally irresponsible that they are pushing back against any effective improvement of recycling, well aware that our environment continues to be heavily impacted from their products’ pollution, and that microplastics from degradation of their products, and from plastics in general, have become a severe health issue. Extended producer responsibility will finally make manufacturers contribute by paying for at least some of the indirect costs of their products.

Please bring the bill to a vote in 2026.

Thank you very much for considering my input, and thank you to Representative McEntee for introducing this important bill.



Dr. Hans Scholl

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