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

H.7911/S.3012 – Relating To Health And Safety -- Extended Producer Responsibility For Packaging And Paper Act

Dear Chair Bennett and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of H.7911/S.3012. The Recycling Partnership is the U.S. nonprofit solving recycling's toughest challenges, together, by tackling problems no single company, community, or policymaker can fix alone. Since 2014, we've helped recover more than 2 billion pounds of new recyclables, avoided 2.6 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and delivered more than 2 million recycling carts to U.S. homes, including approximately [55,000 recycling carts](#) to be delivered to the City of Providence early this summer.

Based on our [2024 State of Residential Recycling](#) report we estimate that the current residential recycling rate across Rhode Island hovers around 26%. [Resource Recovery's 2025 study](#) shows a slightly higher rate of mandatory recycling of 28.9%. These figures reflect the recycling rates for packaging and printed paper. This means that over 120,000 tons of valuable residential recyclable material is lost each year to the Johnston landfill. Included in those lost materials are 70% of all aluminum cans and PET bottles, which are highly recyclable commodities.

We have identified that the key policy ingredient to growing and improving recycling and achieving a circular economy is comprehensive extended producer responsibility (EPR). Comprehensive EPR includes both an EPR system for packaging and printed paper and deposit return systems (DRS), also referred to as bottle bills or recycling refunds.

These policies, when thoughtfully designed and implemented, can deliver an efficient recycling system with high recycling rates, and significant economic and environmental benefits for Rhode Island's communities.

Municipalities throughout Rhode Island currently pay significant costs for recycling services even though recycling rates remain low. Data from the city of Providence shows that the city paid roughly \$10M to collect trash and recycling, \$1.9M in rejected loads of contaminated recyclables, and \$3.4M in disposal tip fees. Assuming that half the city's collection costs are from recycling and that some of the disposal tip fees are reduced through increased recycling, under EPR the city of Providence could save upwards of \$7M each year. Statewide, [Resource Recovery estimates](#) that towns and cities spent \$15.6M on recycling collection alone, costs that would be covered under H.7911/S.3012.

EPR offers broad-based funding to boost recycling for cardboard, printed paper, and a wide range of paper, plastic, metal, and glass packaging and improve recycling rates throughout the state. According to a study conducted by Eunomia Consulting, EPR for packaging can raise Rhode Island's recycling rate up to 52%, doubling the current rate.

In coordination, a well-designed bottle bill can achieve beverage container recycling rates of more than 80%. Most of the bottles and cans that would be included in the state's bottle bill currently have recycling rates closer to 25%. What isn't recycled unfortunately often becomes littered or disposed in the Johnston landfill.

Comprehensive EPR can also ease pressure on the Johnston landfill, which is set to reach its permitted capacity in 2046. Once the landfill reaches capacity, municipalities will need to ship trash out of state or help fund an expansion of the landfill. Resource Recovery estimates that the capital costs needed to expand the Johnston landfill [range from \\$33-\\$980M](#). Considering that packaging generally makes up ~40% of the materials in the municipal waste stream, increasing Rhode Island's packaging recycling rate could meaningfully extend the lifetime of the landfill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this matter.

Sincerely,



John Hite
Sr. Director, Public Policy & Government Affairs
The Recycling Partnership