



May 26, 2026

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

RE: House Bill 7911 – Support – Primo Brands (Poland Spring)

Dear Chair Bennett and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony strongly supporting House Bill 7911 that will enhance and harmonize recycling in Rhode Island by implementing two proven policies—extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging and a beverage container deposit system.

Primo Brands is a leading North American branded beverage company with a focus on healthy hydration that delivers domestically and sustainability sourced offerings. Our trusted brands include Poland Spring®, PureLife® and Saratoga®. At Primo we are working to minimize our environmental impact through more sustainable packaging, incorporating more recycled materials into packaging, and advocating for more effective recycling systems. As a founding member of the Coalition for High Performance Recycling (CHPR), we are committed to advancing a comprehensive policy model that combines Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging and paper products with Recycling Refunds (RR) – also known as a Deposit Return System (DRS) or “bottle bill” – for beverage containers.

We are working to foster a dynamic circular economy where bottles are recycled directly into bottles. But we cannot create a circular economy or generate more recycled feedstock on our own. That’s why we are advocating for an effective and convenient producer-funded recycling system in Rhode Island at the most efficient cost, while reducing litter and protecting the environment.

HB 7911’s hybrid Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Recycling Refunds (RR) model presents the best opportunity to drive higher recovery and recycling rates for beverage containers, while ensuring investment in improving systems for all packaging and paper products. This comprehensive high performance recycling policy would establish a convenient recycling system that avoids material loss, achieves high return rates and makes bottle to bottle recycling reality.

In addition, House Bill 7911 will help industry by creating a stable, locally sourced supply of recycled materials which will help continue to expand our recycled packaging. Bottled water needs high quality, food grade recycled material – a deposit return system is the best way to recover high quality plastic, reprocess that plastic with little material loss to be used as packaging again bringing to life a circular economy.

Additionally, the proposed policy in HB7911 corrects for the issues in neighboring New England states’ bottle bill policies including decentralization, fraud and consumer inconvenience. At the heart of this RI model is a single, producer-funded compliance organization called a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO). The PRO is responsible for registering obligated producers like Primo Brands, developing a membership fee structure, and ensuring effective and efficient program operations and funding (with regulatory oversight). Also, neighboring states struggle with cross-border fraud, where out-of-state containers with no deposit are brought for





redemption. In these states there is no incentive to fight fraud since redemption centers are paid on a per container reimbursement regardless of container origin. The modernized HB 7911 model reimburses redemption centers and participating retailers on a fee-for-service model, reducing the risk of fraudulent behavior. The PRO is also strongly incentivized to identify and prevent fraud, including through required funding for RI DEM for enforcement actions. Lastly, unlike neighboring programs, retailers would have flexibility to opt for collection mechanisms other than in-store reverse vending machines (RVMs), such as bag drop, which would be managed by the PRO – reducing burdens on retail space and staff.

Today, Rhode Island has a 26% recycling rate despite 80% of households having recycling access. Food residue, material contamination and low participation hold the system back, and EPR plus a deposit return system would significantly improve Rhode Islanders' recycling rate and reduce litter. By incentivizing consumers to redeem their deposits as part of a dedicated bottle recycling stream, litter on the beaches and in the water will be dramatically reduced with collected beverage containers being easily recycled and processed into new beverage containers here in the US – all of which is good for human and environmental health.

We urge you to support HB 7911, a coordinated EPR and deposit return system, that will provide the most cost-effective system to improve recycling and catapult Rhode Island towards a circular economy.

Thank you for your consideration,

Liz Donohue
Vice President
Government Affairs

