



One West Exchange Street, Suite 302, Providence, RI 02903

May 27, 2026

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

Re: House Bill 7911 - OPPOSE

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

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Beverage Association (RIBA). RIBA is a trade association that represents the non-alcoholic beverage industry in Rhode Island, comprised of in-state manufacturers and distributors of packaged beverages representing national and regional, family-owned brands. Our members include Coca-Cola Beverages Northeast, Pepsi Bottling Group, Keurig Dr Pepper, Polar Beverages, and Little Rhody Foods. Our members operate 17 production and/or distribution facilities across the state, while directly employing more than 500 workers. We pay more than \$26 million in wages and salaries and produce a direct economic impact of \$150 million. We also indirectly support \$350 million in economic output through purchases of goods and services for our production and distribution operations, and we support the jobs of more than 5,000 retail workers in the state.

On behalf of our association, I would like to take this opportunity to oppose House Bill 7911, which would establish a comprehensive program for extended producer responsibility for packaging and paper, and for recycling of beverage containers. While we are in strong opposition to the underlying bill, today we are opposing the legislation from a procedural perspective. As you may recall, very similar legislation was considered by the General Assembly last year, House Bill 6207. Instead of passing this proposal, this legislation was amended to direct the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) and the Department of Administration (DOA) to “commission a statewide needs assessment to determine the infrastructure, policy, and programmatic requirements necessary to support a statewide redemption and recycling plan including packaging materials, paper products, standard and miniature size beverage containers including, but not limited to, aluminum and bimetal containers, glass containers, plastic containers, and other priority materials as designated” by DEM, RIRR and DOA, R.I.G.L 23-19.19. The law mandates that DEM procure a third-party consultant, and file an interim report by April 1, 2026, and a final report no later than December 1, 2026.

On April 1, 2026, DEM filed an interim report with the RI General Assembly in accordance with R.I.G.L 23-19.19, which I have attached for your convenience. In that letter, DEM advised that it has tentatively selected a third-party vendor, and work is expected to begin in

April. DEM also advised that it worked with RIRRC to allocate the appropriate funds. The process mandated by the Legislature in 2025 is currently well underway. This work has or is currently taking up resources in three (3) separate state agencies and will cost the Rhode Island taxpayers money. Passing House Bill 7911 would completely undermine the intent of R.I.G.L.23-19.19, as well as the work that is being done by DEM, RIRRC and DOA pursuant to that statute. If the General Assembly passes this legislation, it will waste taxpayer dollars and interfere with the State achieving an optimal solution to improve recycling in Rhode Island. For these reasons, we respectfully request that you hold House Bill 7911 for further study.

Sincerely,

Margaret Hogan Sweeney, Esq.
Executive Director
Rhode Island Beverage Association

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