



May 27, 2026

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

RE: HOUSE BILL 7911 – AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR PACKAGING AND PAPER ACT

Chair Bennett and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we submit testimony on House Bill 7911, which establishes a comprehensive framework for extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging and paper, and deposit return system (DRS) for beverage containers.

Municipalities across Rhode Island continue to face increasing financial and operational pressures related to solid waste management and recycling systems, while being asked to do more with fewer resources. Local governments are responsible for managing collection, processing, education, and disposal costs, even as recycling markets remain volatile and contamination in recycling streams continues to increase operational burdens. House Bill 7911 reflects an effort to address these long-standing challenges by reexamining how responsibility for packaging and materials management is shared between municipalities and producers.

The League recognizes the significant work that has been undertaken through the legislative study commission process, including extensive stakeholder engagement and analysis of potential policy approaches. That work has provided an important foundation for ongoing discussions regarding how a statewide EPR and beverage container system could be structured in Rhode Island.

While the League is still reviewing specific program design details, we support the continued exploration of policy approaches that seek to reduce municipal burden, improve recycling system performance, and promote long-term sustainability. Based on feedback from our member municipalities, there is broad interest in ensuring that any final framework meaningfully addresses municipal cost pressures and operational challenges.

The League's Executive Board has reviewed this legislation and supports continued participation in the development of a comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return System (DRS) framework. The League looks forward to reviewing the statewide needs assessment being conducted by the Rhode Island Redemption and Recycling Advisory Council regarding beverage container redemption, packaging, and recycling planning, as well as continued engagement with the Council, subject matter experts, municipalities, and all stakeholders as the policy is further refined and implementation discussions continue.

From a municipal perspective, key considerations moving forward include ensuring that any system design appropriately accounts for local operational realities, provides clarity around responsibilities, and delivers meaningful relief from the rising costs of recycling and materials management.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns appreciates the opportunity to provide input and looks forward to continuing engagement as this legislation advances.

Thank you for your consideration and for taking our perspective into account as part of this important discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.R.R.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Environment and Natural Resources Committee