



Sent via email to: sen-mckenney@rilegislature.gov & rep-mcentee@rilegislature.gov

March 20, 2025

To: Senator Mark McKenney & Representative Carol Hagan McEntee, Co-Chairs, *Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study and Provide Recommendations to Protect our Environment and Natural Resources from Plastic Bottle Waste*

Re: Draft Final Report & Recommendations

Our organizations have been honored to serve on the joint study commission over the past 18 months and appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the important issues discussed by the commission. The draft *Final Report* of the commission accurately reflects much of the information presented to the commission. Through numerous presentations and discussions during our meetings, the following was made clear:

- There are serious and widespread problems with pollution in our environment from single-use beverage containers, including harms to water quality, marine life, birds and ecosystems.
- Improvements can and should be made to our recycling system, particularly as it relates to the collection and recyclability of beverage containers, as well as other single-use packaging.
- Deposit return systems for beverage containers in the U.S. and abroad – also known as “bottle bills” - have been proven over decades to be effective at *both* reducing litter and improving recycling.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems for packaging, while relatively new and still somewhat unproven, have the potential to improve recycling. However, those systems are not designed – nor have they been proven – to reduce litter or remove beverage container pollution in our environment.

Our organizations strongly support “option 1” and “option 2” in the draft report as both a standalone “bottle bill” and a combined “bottle bill”/EPR would address the problem of beverage container pollution and litter. However, we strongly oppose “option 3” as **the creation of an EPR system for packaging without a deposit program for beverage containers would fail to address the problem that our study commission was tasked with figuring out how to address.**

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Jed Thorp
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Save The Bay

Emily Howe
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