

Connecticut Bottle Bill Stakeholders Public Meeting

Meeting Minutes

August 9, 2021 2:00pm via ZOOM

Present: See Attachment A

Next meeting: TBD

Prepared by: Elizabeth Moore, DEEP and Chelsey Hahn,
DEEP

I. Call to Order and Announcements

Meeting started at 2:03PM.

Katie Dykes, DEEP Commissioner and Senator Christine Cohen, Co-chair of the Environment Committee provided introductions and welcoming remarks.

II. Committee Reports

Chris Nelson, Supervising Environmental Analyst presented an overview of the Connecticut Bottle Bill as modified by Public Act 21-58. Chris specifically noted three areas of focus for the stakeholder outreach and public comment period, including:

1. Public Act 21-58, Section 8;
2. Public Act 21-58, Section 9; and
3. June Special Session, Public Act No. 21-2, Section 65 and Section 308(b)(15).

Jules Bailey, Chief Stewardship Officer, Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) presented on Oregon's Bottle Bill approach and emphasized the importance of multiple, convenient options for collection. Jules stressed the differences between the Connecticut and Oregon system while noting some of the best practices for Oregon that may help Connecticut as the state transitions toward a modernized Bottle Bill system. To reduce cross-state fraud in Oregon, the OBRC is allowed to confirm Oregon residency through checking license plates or asking for Oregon Identification.

Susan Collins, Executive Director, Container Recycling Institute (CRI) presented on context for the changes to the Connecticut Bottle Bill within the larger frame of Bottle Bill legislation in other states. Susan also noted the weight of glass containers and the importance of removing those materials from the single stream.

III. Roundtable

Jules Bailey and Susan Collins led a panel discussion and answered questions in the ZOOM chat box. Attendees asked questions about: distinctions between the redemption infrastructure in Oregon compared to that of Connecticut; how Oregon's Bottle Bill is part of the larger statewide materials management/recycling system; how the escheats money is used to fund Oregon's stewardship organization system;

inflation; the plastic film bags used in Oregon's BagDrop system; equity in urban centers and communities of color as it relates to redemption centers owned and operated by people of color; which parties are involved in the stewardship organization and how it functions; how to have faith in an industry-run system; how to keep track of contacts/ distributors for new products added to the Bottle Bill; the impact of COVID-19 on redemption rates; grants to install automated counting machines; and the importance of increased outreach to and consideration of the impact to and inclusion of urban centers, low income consumers and communities of color.

IV. Public Comment

Stakeholder/ public comment focused on three primary areas:

1. Establishment of a stewardship organization and development of a stewardship plan;
2. Capture of 80% of glass containers sold by wine and spirits distributors; and
3. Establishment of a grants program for new redemption centers.

Commissioner Dykes also requested speakers comment on the 12 questions listed in [Bottle-Bill-Stakeholder-Notice--07-16-21.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#)

Bree Dietly, Partner, Northbridge Environmental, representing the American Beverage Association expressed support for the creation of a stewardship organization to implement reforms to the system and guarantee better performance. Bree noted that the stewardship program should be modeled to ensure better efficiency, convenience for consumers and flexibility to make changes to the system, as appropriate. In the short term, Bree suggested that redemption infrastructure be developed to be diverse and represent a variety of options and asked DEEP to consider whether new redemption centers are improving efficiency or duplicating previously existing infrastructure.

Shahil Kantesaria, Principle owner of Central Connecticut Redemption center, New Britain expressed excitement for the efforts to modernize the Bottle Bill. Shahil suggested an inability to support the stewardship model until the changes regarding increased redemption centers, expansion of container types and deposit increase goes into effect. Shahil suggested that the stewardship model should face penalties for not reaching redemption rates and have properly enforced guardrails and oversight from the State,

Elizabeth Balkan, Director of Reloop Americas commended the work Connecticut is doing in modernizing the bottle bill. Reloop has extensive experience with deposit return systems and cited research that shows deposit return systems help gather better materials, and create jobs. With strong government oversight and a centralized system that includes transparency, standards and penalties this can incentivize the 80% collection rate outlined in PA 21-58. Elizabeth stated concern that a stewardship organization with no financial penalty for not meeting the targeted goals will not succeed citing many European examples without penalties.

Stephanie Acquario, Conservation Law Foundation suggested that any deposit initiator organization should be established to ensure that the Bottle Bill improves recycling, protects the environment and works for all Connecticut residents. Stephanie suggested that the deposit initiator organization must see through reforms, not reduce existing infrastructure, and implement a plan that will achieve DEEP's oversight metrics. DEEP cannot approve any organization or plan that is not committed to those reforms and/or plans to dismantle or reduce existing redemption infrastructure. Oversight and accountability are essential to ensure reforms and modernization occurs as intended. DEEP should clarify how 80%

redemption rate is measured and the deposit initiator should not be measuring redemption rates. Any approved plan must include performance criteria and not be unchecked by industry.

Steve Changaris, Connecticut Chapter of National Waste and Recycling Association shared that the private haulers and recyclers in the state currently manage a lot of the bottle bill materials and the concern that capturing more material from homeowners may or could result in less revenue for the private recycling groups in the state and may impact costs of operation for members of the NWRA. Steve shared that the recycling companies have made investments in the state recycling infrastructure and in doing so they have a stakeholder position in this process.

Kathy Nelson, Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach Center expressed interest in a new redemption center in the City of Bristol. Brian's Angels currently uses volunteer hours to collect and hand sort bottles and cans, Kathy is hoping that the stewardship program in Connecticut develops a program similar to the bag drop program that the Oregon model uses and that folks could designate Brian's Angels as a recipient of bottle redemption funds. An additional redemption center in Bristol would also be helpful for the group to be more efficient in time, volunteers and other resources to collect, sort and redeem bottles and cans.

Mike Noel, Governmental Affairs Manager, TOMRA systems discussed the ways in which TOMRA works with business partners in Connecticut to provide redemption center technology, coordination with distributors and facilitation of fees, container pickup services and material processing facilities. TOMRA believes the measures of the bill can dramatically increase the number of containers recycled and should incentivize retailers to invest in clean and convenient bottle room experiences and also increase the number of redemption centers and they support these efforts. Mike stated TOMRA is looking forward to share what they have learned with the stakeholders to optimize the system further.

Julie Cammarata, speaking on behalf of Envipco and Strategic Materials wished to reiterate Mike's comments on the great changes to the bottle bill. Julie also shared that strategic materials, a glass recycler located in South Windsor would like to work with the other stakeholders on achieving the glass diversion goals of the bill. Glass has unique challenges due to its weight, Julie suggested a multi-level approach to glass separation and collection and asked that DEEP consider allowing individual haulers and other start-ups to collect the glass that may be part of the bottle bill, approaching the idea like organics collection, to remove glass and its potential issues from the system to be used as a clean feedstock to return the glass back to use as a bottle.

Penny Newbury, ARC Eastern Connecticut spoke to address the section of the bill about the grant programs for redemption centers. ARC is a locally-owned non-profit that serves people with developmental disabilities and their families through a variety of means one of which is their redemption center in Woodstock Connecticut. This redemption center is collecting far more bottles and cans than they can process and if the grant funds are made available they will be able to expand and update their center to dramatically increase their capacity and support more jobs for people with developmental disabilities.

Bud McAllister, Partners in Healthy Communities shared that the litter problem around a homeless center and a package store in New London could be mitigated by using the funds from the bill to build a regional recycling center located under a bridge in New London and building upon a partnership with the City Center District.

Representative Mary Mushinsky noted the challenges of glass in the waste and redemption systems and the need to separate it as the highest value material comes from a clean stream. The Representative emphasized the need to determine how wine and spirit containers would fit into a stewardship model and suggested that allowing the 10-cent redemption rate to begin before starting a stewardship model may be good practice. Additionally, Mary mentioned redemption system where the pay out could include transportation tickets may be well-supported and works in Europe. Finally, Mary requested on behalf of a constituent that the industry considers using plastic materials rather than glass to protect those gathering discarded miniature liqueur bottles.

Megan Macomber, CT League of Conservation Voters discussed the key equity updates necessary for increasing redemption center locations, which is critical for increasing access for those using public transportation and targeting redemption centers in underserved communities. Megan also highlighted that any stewardship model must contain a detailed plan for implementation and plans to ensure adequate public education surrounding Bottle Bill modernization efforts.

Louis Rosado Burch, Citizens Campaign for the Environment noted interest in improvement and key updates to the Bottle Bill and strong support for updates to the system, but urged DEEP to give time for the updates to go into effect before changing system structure through the implementation of a stewardship organization. Louis suggested that the first priority should be implementing and enforcing as the system currently exists and implementing new stewardship organization only after the new system has been updated. Louis noted that DEEP must clarify how approval of the organization will improve/ provide benefits to consumers and maintain clear oversight/ enforcement for DEEP as well as allow for meaningful opportunities for public comment throughout the process.

Kristi Talmadge, Bristol CT, Volunteer for Bristol Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach Center noted interest in automatic machine counters in Bristol and expressed frustration with users currently manually counting bottles/ cans.

V. Adjournment

Chris Nelson, Supervising Environmental Analyst reminded attendees that DEEP will be accepting written comments until August 27th at 11:59pm. All future information and meeting details will be posted on the new CT Bottle Bill Stakeholder page located at: [Bottle Bill Stakeholder Process \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/deep/bottlebill)

Attachment A

Aaron Budris

Aimee Berger-Girvalo

Alexis Bourassa

Allison Goldsmith

Andrew Brown

Andrew Droney

Andrew Hoskins

Andrew Lopez

Angela | Phillips Health Ministry (Phillips Health Ministry)

April Regan

Betsey Wingfield

Betsy Gara

Bhargav Patel

Bill Pulsifer

Bree Dietly

Bud McAllister

Caren Harder

Carmen Holzman

Caroline Slettedahl

Catherine Matzul

Chelsey Hahn

Chelsey Hahn - CT DEEP (Chelsey Hahn)

Chetan Savasani

Chirag

chris lippke

Chris Nelson

Christine Cohen

Christine Palm

Christopher Phelps

Chuck Riegle

CN2 (Chris Nelson)

Connecticut Network

Courtney Lindberg

CRAIG LEROY

Daniel McGowan

David Fleming

David McKeegan

David T Wilson

David T Wilson Rep66th (David T Wilson)

Denevan O'Connell

DeVivo DeVivo

Dipak

Doris Johnson

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Edith Pestana

Edward Reagan

Elizabeth Balkan

Elizabeth DeWitt

Elly Moore

Elly Moore - CT DEEP

Elly Moore - CT DEEP (Elly Moore)

Eric Filardi

Eric Winter

Erich Bell

Francis Bartolomeo

Frederick Miers

Gabrielle Frigon

Gabrielle Frigon CT DEEP (Gabrielle Frigon)

George Allen

Gina Mordeaux

Gina Mordeaux - Keurig Dr Pepper (Gina Mordeaux)

Harrison Nantz

Hillary Glass

James Albis

James Paolino

James Toner

James Woulfe

Janice EhleMeyer

Jay Aronson

Jen Heaton-Jones - HRRRA (Jennifer Heaton-Jones)

Jennifer Heaton-Jones

Jennifer Wendt

Joe canino

john bailey

John Cottell

John Hite

John Hite (CT DEEP) (John Hite)

John Karyczak

Josh Hughes

Jude Malone

Jules Bailey

Julie Cammarata

Kara Weinstein
Karen Weeks
Kathleen Golas
Kathy Nelson
Katie Dykes
kevin spinella
Kim O'Rourke
Kirsten Witt
Kris Johnson
Krishna Winston
Kristen Brown
Kristi Talmadge
Laura Francis
Laura Francis-Durham (Laura Francis)
Lawrence Cafero
Leslie Hickey
Linda Schreiber
Lisa Fecke
Lori Vitagliano
Louis Rosado Burch
Mallory Daley
Mark Bobman
Mark Messier
Mary Mushinsky
Matt Knickerbocker - Bethel (Town Bethel)
Maureen Nicholson
McKenzie Kotuby
Megan Macomber
Melinda Tuhus

Melissa Biggs

Michael Rell

Mike Demicco

Mike Noel

Molly Renaud

Name (Original Name)

P Garala

Pamela Roach

Patricia Taylor

Patricia Taylor - EHHI (she/her) (Patricia Taylor)

Patrick Grasso

Paul aresta

Paul Balavender

Paul Catino

Peggy Diaz

Penny Newbury

Peter Gallo

Peter Hearn

Phillips Health Ministry

Prem Dave

Rachael Healey

Rachel Rooney

Rep. Mary Mushinsky

Rep. Mary Mushinsky (Mary Mushinsky)

Rick Ross

Robert Brinton

robert isner

Rocky Gallo

Ryan Bingham

Sarah Nichols

Scott Hansen

Sean Hughes

Shahil Kantesaria

stan gormley

Stephanie Acquario

Stephanie Acquario (CLF) (Stephanie Acquario)

Steve Changaris

Sue Corfman

SUSAN COLLINS

Susan Peterson

Susannah Smith

Sydnee Grushack

Theresa Govert

Thomas Strahle

Timothy Phelan

Todd Rolland

Tom Metzner

Tony Manfre

Town Bethel

Tracy Persico

Virginia Walton

Wayne Pesce