

# Connecticut Bottle Bill Advisory Group Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2023 1:00pm via ZOOM

Present:	See Attachment A
Next meeting:	Monday, December 18 at 1:00pm via ZOOM
Prepared by:	Elizabeth Moore, DEEP

### **I. Call to Order and Announcements**

The meeting started at 1:00PM.

James Albis, Director of the Office of Policy and Planning, Bureau of Materials Management and Compliance Assurance, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) provided welcoming remarks.

### **II. Committee Reports**

James Albis described the purpose of the advisory group in meeting regularly to receive updates and provide input on DEEP's implementation of its responsibilities under Public Act 21-58. Mr. Albis described the purpose of the meeting in discussing cross-border redemption, and any other topics stakeholders wish to discuss.

Chris Nelson, Supervising Environmental Analyst, CT DEEP presented background on cross-border redemption.

Patina Chacon and Monique Wilkerson, CalRecycle presented on the multi-million-dollar industry of recycling fraud in California.

Mike Noel, Public Affairs Director, TOMRA presented on efforts and options to mitigate cross-border redemption in Connecticut.

### **III. Roundtable and Public Comment**

Following the presentations, the meeting was opened to all attendees for discussion. DEEP received the following comments.

Susan Collins said it is important to note that none of the cross-border enforcement in California would be possible if there was not already border crossing inspection stations for other reasons related to food and agriculture in California.

Other questions were asked about funding and the number of staff in California working on enforcement of recycling fraud. Representatives of CalRecycle were not able to answer those questions and asked that any questions of that nature be routed through CalRecycle public record requests.

Chris Nelson asked how many products currently sold in Connecticut have unique markings for redemption in different states, like Poland Spring. Mr. Nelson also asked, if there is a distributor

providing co-products to retailers in both Connecticut and Rhode Island, would they have two different stocks with slightly different barcodes for selling in the different states.

Kevin Reynolds asked if the volume of cross-border redemption has remained steady in California over the last decade.

Elaine Gruber asked if TOMRA will be monitoring the volumes of containers redeemed in New York at the Redemption Center level to see if the redemption rates drop when the redemption value raises to ten cents in Connecticut. Additionally, Ms. Gruber asked whether TOMRA will be able to understand who may own Redemption Centers in both New York and Connecticut, or another state.

Jude Malone, CT Beer Wholesalers said not all distributors have the ability to label product with specific codes. Ms. Malone also suggested it is not currently a crime to bring bottles across the border in Connecticut, even if DEEP is informed of instances of cross-border redemption. Connecticut Beer Wholesalers hopes to work closely with DEEP and the legislature to implement something to remedy the issue as quickly as possible.

Mike Noel supported Jude Malone's comments related to enforcement and clarification of the law. Mr. Noel also shared an example of state-specific markings. In Michigan, distributors put numbers on the bottom of containers so the markings can be completed later in the production process. Mr. Noel noted the RVM machines still had to be updated to recognize those containers in Michigan.

John Caturano said attendees should be mindful that the way dollars are distributed from brand owners in California is very different from northeast. Mr. Caturano said he was part of developing the red label, which was intended to address a redemption rate over 100% in northeast states. Monitoring what happens at Connecticut Redemption Centers and watching redemption volumes in the coming months will be important.

Susan Collins noted the problem of cross-border fraud can occur on both the redemption side and the sale side. There is a huge opportunity for cross-border fraud in the form of retailers purchasing beverages, accepting them for delivery at warehouses not in Bottle Bill states, and then distributing them to stores in Bottle Bill states and initiating the deposit at that point. Ms. Collins said cross-border fraud can be small or large and can do a lot of harm on the sales side. Sometimes it is not the consumer or redeemer's fault.

Wayne Pesce, Connecticut Food Association, reiterated Susan Collins' comments and said cross-border fraud on the sale side is happening in trans-shipping from New Jersey to Connecticut. Mr. Pesce also suggested the 240 container limit on bottles redeemed at retail locations is intended as a fraud protection mechanism. As a result, the biggest cross-border redemption problem will be at independent redemption centers. Mr. Pesce noted he believes every retailer will enforce the 240 bottle redemption limit and asked for more enforcement help from DEEP.

Jean Cronin said most package stores take back containers by hand and asked if there is a way that stores can post hours or times when they can take bottles back.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

James Albis closed the meeting and said that any thoughts related to the topics discussed and any future meeting topics may be sent to the [DEEP.MMCAPlanning@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.MMCAPlanning@ct.gov) email address.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 18th at 1:00pm.

Attachment A.

James Albis

Beth Milligan

Laura Pointek

Jude Malone

Eric Gjede

Monique Wilkerson

Rachel Schnabel

Shahil Kantesaria

Chris Nelson - CT DEEP (Chris Nelson)

Peter Gallo

Jay Aronson

Kyle Skinner

Reagan Kenney

Christine O'Neill

Patina Chacon

Meghan Portfolio

Mike Manfre

Tyler Bowne

C.J. Kowaleski

Scott Quincy

Paul Aresta

Brenna Toman

Samantha Davis  
Elizabeth Moore  
Tommy Zappa  
David Seaman  
Viola Johnson Jacobs  
wayne pesce  
Jean Cronin  
Brian Uluski  
John Caturano  
Cailin Wassell  
Alissa Wesche  
Tracy Persico  
Kevin Kranzler  
doug bedard  
Hillary Glass  
Alexis Bourassa  
Andrew Welna  
Kevin Reynolds  
Andrew Droney  
Alyssa Murphy  
Kayla Ritchie  
Sean Hughes  
Thomas Dougherty  
Amber Steen  
Adam Lord  
Thomas Strahle  
Lauren Foster Summer

Donald McCalman

Brian Sullivan

john bailey

Brandon Hayden

19146641664

Eric Filardi

Caroline Slettedahl

Elaine Gruber

Hector Arzeno

Ben Parsons

Pamela Roach

Mike Noel

Lucy Dathan

DTEN Cart

Susan Collins

carl fortuna

Jennifer Amundsen

12022137971

Aundré Bumgardner

Sally Davies

Tony Manfre

Carrie Rand-Anastasiades

Denise Raap

14048249202

Donna Hamzy Carroccia

Edith Pestana

Tim Coleman

Conrad Cutler

Evan Dantos

Emma MacDonald

Mike Demicco

Joseph DeNicola

Kayla Gelardi

12036716567

Francis Brady

Chris Charest

Anneke Altieri

Bill Malitsky

Mary Mushinsky

Penny Newbury

Diane Lauricella

Mary Hogue

Julie Cammarata

Mike Esposito

John Staunton