

# Connecticut Bottle Bill Advisory Group Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2023 1:00pm via ZOOM

Present:	See Attachment A
Next meeting:	Monday, October 16 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. Albis described the purpose of the meeting in discussing the order that Commissioner Dykes signed August 2, 2022, regarding the use of "CTRV" on labels for covered beverages under the Connecticut Bottle Bill. Albis requested feedback on three specific questions:

1. How is the Commissioner's order regarding the use of "CTRV" on labels working in practice?
2. What can be done to improve the current situation regarding labeling?
3. Should the order have an end date? If so, when should that be? Note: An end date would mean all covered beverages would revert to the requirements of CGS 22a-244, that labels must include either the refund value (which will be 10 cents in January) or the words "return for deposit" or "return for refund"

Albis also requested attendees share any other feedback they may have, even outside the scope of the three specific questions.

### III. Roundtable and Public Comment

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

Sandra Grance, American Beverage Association, described background on the request to use universal "CTRV" labels, including supply chain logistics and ease for consumers. Ms. Grance noted the collection of the deposit is not controlled by what is on the label. Grance recommended continuing engagement with consumers and working with retail customers using the "CTRV" language.

Representative Mike Demicco noted labelling of "CTRV" was identified as being potentially problematic for consumers because it doesn't identify the value of the can as five or ten cents. Representative

Demicco suggested explicitly labelling five or ten cents on the cans is the right way to incentivize people to redeem.

Representative Kathy Kennedy asked for an update related to education for consumers.

Representative Mary Mushinsky said she has witnessed many citizens putting containers in the single-stream recycling bin rather than the container redemption system. Representative Mushinsky does not think the public understands which materials are within the system. Representative Mushinsky requested DEEP keep hard cider in the Bottle Bill.

Representative Joseph Gresko noted the California “CTRV” labeling was implemented because of varying deposit amounts charged based on weight in California. Representative Gresko said Connecticut has and will have a flat rate. Representative Gresko said it is in the industry's interest to assist the state in education about new deposit fees and additional items, because escheats money going to the industry is tied to redemption rates

Felice Tecce, representing a craft brewer in a neighboring state that sells beer into Connecticut via a Connecticut wholesaler, noted his organization was just notified of the ten-cent change going into effect on January 1, 2024. Mr. Tecce asked whether they can continue using existing supply of stamped beverage can ends which include refund values that do not match changes in required labeling after January 1, 2023.

A representative of Phillips Health Ministry asked what DEEP is doing to make redemption easier for Connecticut residents without their own transportation, both in urban centers and rural areas. Additionally, the representative asked how DEEP is holding retailers accountable for accepting returns on all products they sell and keeping redemption machines at those retailers operable daily.

John Bailey, representing Central Connecticut Redemption Center, reiterated the concern expressed by redemption centers that labeling “CTRV” brings a lack of clarity for customers, and noted that anything that can be done to educate the public on the change in deposit is a good thing. Bailey noted Central Connecticut Redemption Center looks forward to working with other partners to help educate the public and hopes DEEP will make the transition process as clear to the public as possible.

Mary Hogue asked if the circumstances around the deposit increase incentivizes people to hold on to bottles and cans until January 1, 2024, so they can get double the redemption rate that they paid.

Kyle Skinner, representing a manufacturer based in Washington that imports beer from Europe, noted Oregon gave the manufacturers two years notice when the state made changes to the deposit in 2017. Mr. Skinner asked if the wholesalers are not allowed to buy inventory after January 1, 2024, if there is no ten-cent deposit indicator on it.

Several attendees reiterated and emphasized the question posed from Mr. Skinner in the chat, including: Julie McGrody, representing a small craft brewery outside of Connecticut, who asked if suppliers are authorized to use stored inventory after January 1, 2024; and Scott Quincy who described this as a multiple producer issue and said if already-canned inventories are not allowed to be sold in Connecticut, it will force significant destruction of materials, contrary to Connecticut’s environmental goals.

A representative from Phillips Health Ministry asked how many new redemption centers were created with redemption center grant funds, and how many people of color are owners of those new redemption centers funded through grant funds.

Veronica Colas, a food regulatory attorney representing a number of food companies looking to ensure they comply with the new requirements, said if DEEP makes any changes to the order allowing "CTRV," it would be important to provide enough advance notice to industry. Many companies are using "CTRV" in compliance with the order, particularly for products that are newly covered by the bottle bill, and therefore would have otherwise needed two label changes within a short period of time. If companies will need to remove "CTRV" and change to "CT 10 cents," it will be important to provide advance notice to industry. Labeling changes take time (in some cases 12-18 months or longer when making changes to multiple stock keeping units). It would also be important to have an acknowledgment that existing label inventory may continue to be used.

Robyn Nichols asked if there are any areas of the state with a greater need or lack of applicants under the Redemption Center Grant Program. Nichols also asked about the distinction between redemption centers and other locations where bottles can be redeemed.

Elaine Gruber asked how companies are working to minimize the impact of the containers sold in neighboring states with a five cent deposit being returned in CT for ten cents after January 1, 2024.

Jude Malone, Connecticut Beer Wholesalers, returned to the subject of public education and suggested industry is working to educate consumers. Retailers, reverse vending machine providers, and deposit initiators have been meeting and working together to find a path forward.

Sandra Grance, American Beverage Association, described educational efforts in stores, including signage on the shelves and other printed materials.

A representative for Phillips Health Ministry asked if there is any thought about calling out the higher redemption amount on the retail floor with the unit pricing signage.

In the chat, Christine O'Neil, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, said it is not encouraging to hear that education will include printed materials like "neck-ringers" and in-store flyers. This is just creating more waste, when the problem could be solved by changing the messaging on the bottle itself.

Francis Brady asked if the bottlers or food industry can share some of these advertisements to town waste committees to help distribute them.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

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

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 16 at 1:00pm.

Attachment A.

Name (Original Name)

James Albis

Peter Gallo

Kevin Spinella

The Connecticut Network  
(CT-N) The Connecticut  
Network (CT-N)

Ben Goldberg

Tony Manfre

Andrew Welna

Mike Manfre

Christine O'Neill

Scott Quincy

Tracy Persico

Sam Saunders

Laura Pointek

Kathy Kennedy

Phillips Health Ministry

Jude Malone

Tommy Zappa

Donna Hamzy Carroccia

Chris Nelson - CT DEEP  
(Chris Nelson)

Sue Citron

Brian Popovich

Thomas Strahle

Kyle Skinner

Jay Aronson

Joe Gresko

Allen Holcomb

Ethan Van Ness

Joseph DeNicola

Dorothy Piszczek

Elaine Gruber

Alex Jones

Cindy Harrison

Elizabeth Moore

Alissa Wesche

Julie McGrody

Sandra Grance

Peter Timboe

Donald McCalman

John Cottell

Adrian Vannahme

Eric Gjede

Susan Smith

Susannah Smith

Alyssa Murphy

kevin veseey

Ryan Bingham

Mary Hogue

Francis Brady

Brian Sullivan

Jean Cronin

Reagan Kenney

Kayla Gelardi

Sean Hughes

Veronica Colas

Caroline Slettedahl  
Jennifer Heaton-Jones  
Lori Brown  
Viola Johnson Jacobs  
Tracy Baran  
Erica Zakrzewski  
ROBYN NICHOLS  
Jonathan Pilatti  
Andrew Droney  
Amy Brink  
Anita Schwartz  
Jennifer Perry  
Samantha Davis  
Brandon Hayden  
Dana Bennett  
James Toner  
Karmina Fefferman  
Lisa Fecke  
Annette Coste  
Margaux Gingras  
john bailey  
Chad Gourley  
Joy Avallone  
Mike Demicco  
Sally Davies  
Hillary Glass  
Brenna Toman

Paul Aresta - CEQ

Deanne Holtz

Tyler Bowne

Josh Hughes

Preety Deol

Krishna Winston

Lauren Foster Summer

casey larkins

Mary Fox

Kelly Colvin

Dan Blaemire

Linda Orr

Patrick Lynch

Felice Tecce

Carolyn Bayne

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Sabrina Correll

Itsue Peterson

Greg Lesco Town of  
Vernon

Jennifer Amundsen

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Anthony Nolan

Donna Veach

Cesar Zapata

Amber Steen

Humphrey Amedeo

Marcus Holt

kirsten witt

Tim Coleman

Rick Lopes

Penny Newbury

Tiffany Carlson

Meghan Zachry

Nadia Mendoza

Mary Mushinsky

John Caturano

Keith Denning