



2021 Bottle Bill Stakeholder Process Comment

August 27, 2021

We applaud DEEP for ensuring a cooperative implementation process for this year's Bottle Bill update by collecting public input on meeting the state's goals for wine & liquor bottle collection, creating a stewardship organization, and a grant program to develop new redemption centers. In addition to these comments we also submitted joint comments with the CT Bottle Bill Works Coalition.

This year's update to CT's Bottle Bill, Public Act 21-58, includes 3 major improvements to the program; expanding to non-carbonated beverages in 2023, increasing the deposit to 10 cents in 2024, and increasing the handling fee October 2021. We have worked with stakeholders for years to pass these comprehensive updates, and the provisions in this law should be allowed to fully come into effect and take hold before Connecticut shifts to a stewardship model.

This bill also includes key equity and accessibility updates that will increase redemption locations in cities and towns across the state of Connecticut, ensuring that all of our communities can easily redeem their deposits. This is absolutely critical because we continuously hear feedback that it is difficult for people who take public transit, or don't have reliable access to a car, to return their deposits without a grocery store or redemption center nearby. The reverse vending machine requirement for certain retailers, and the new grant program to open redemption centers in environmental justice communities, will give us the opportunity to target redemption locations in areas that have been underserved by the previous law.

Any stewardship model must include detailed targets and metrics, including dates, for achieving 80% redemption of wine and liquor bottles. We need to get this highly recyclable, heavy glass out of our waste stream and help municipalities being crushed by high recycling costs. In addition, a stewardship organization must have a plan to address nips as well. At its core, the Bottle Bill is a litter reduction and recycling program, so an organization operating under this bill needs a plan to redeem these small bottles that make up a majority of the litter we see in our streets, waterways and public spaces.

Representation and engagement of stakeholders, communities and redemption centers is critical to ensure continued improvement of a stewardship model. These parties must be able to work collaboratively with a stewardship organization to ensure adequate public education on what items are covered under the bill, and how individuals can redeem their deposits.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and we look forward to further collaboration on implementing the Bottle Bill in the future.

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