



P0 Box 7114  
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norwalkriver.org

March 5, 2020

Re: HB 5340 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MODERNIZATION OF THE CONNECTICUT BOTTLE REDEMPTION PROGRAM

Dear Co-Chairs and members of the Environment Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association which represents over 1500 participants in the seven watershed towns of Norwalk, Wilton, Ridgefield, Redding, Weston, New Canaan, and Lewisboro NY to ask for your support of HB 5340 to update CT's bottle bill in order to help keep plastic out of our environment, especially the Norwalk River and Long Island Sound.

NRWA and volunteers from the community pull over 2000 pounds of trash a year out of our river, most of it plastic bottles, cans and glass bottles. We are tired of seeing this. We have also had the opportunity to go out on the Sound Keeper's boat trawling for microplastics in Long Island Sound, and examining them afterwards. These bits of plastic are pervasive and threaten aquatic life and human health, as they work their way up the food chain. We must take action to stop plastic pollution, and updating our bottle bill is a proven way to do that.

Please update the bottle bill to

- Increase the handling fees paid to redemption centers & authorized retailers for each container collected
- Expand the deposit law to cover non-carbonated beverages, wine & liquor bottles
- Raise the deposit value to at least 10 cents on covered containers.

We have read that Connecticut has the lowest performing deposit system in the world, with a redemption rate on covered containers at 51% (a 37% drop in container recycling from where the state was 15 years ago). This illustrates how out of date our current policy is. What are we waiting for? Our towns are facing a recycling crisis, and we are working on the local level to reduce waste out of our homes, schools, and towns. Passing HB 5340 is something huge the state legislature could do to help.

Thank you for the chance to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Louise Washer, President  
Norwalk River Watershed Association

New Canaan, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Weston, Wilton, Lewisboro NY