



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5340
AN ACT CONCERNING THE MODERNIZATION OF THE CONNECTICUT BOTTLE
REDEMPTION PROGRAM

March 2, 2020

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN SUPPORT of HB 5340** to address modernization of Connecticut's Bottle Bill.

The Bottle Bill provides incentive for consumers to recycle their beverage containers, thereby reducing litter throughout the state and keeping recyclable bottle containers out of landfills. The Bottle Bill needs to be expanded to include non-carbonated beverages such as teas, soft drinks, energy drinks, and juices.

The Bottle deposit has remained the same despite inflation and increased redemption facility costs. This has led to many redemption centers closing their doors. Four years ago, there were 21 redemption centers in the state, now there are only 16. Connecticut needs to increase the bottle redemption deposit in order to keep these vital recycling facilities open and running. Increasing the redemption price to 10 cents would mean that these redemption facilities could keep up with rising operation costs and continue to provide recycling services in Connecticut.

In order to ensure a prosperous Bottle Bill in Connecticut, lawmakers need to implement a specific timeline. The timeline in the bill is too far out if we want to make progress in reducing pollution. Lawmakers need to increase the handling fee to 3.5 cents by July 1, 2020. By January 1, 2021, the deposit value needs to be increased to add more containers to the system. And by July 1, 2021 lawmakers need to expand the categories of acceptable containers to include wine and liquor bottles.

An expansion of the bottle redemption program is popular among state voters. According to a poll conducted in January by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, 81% of voters in Connecticut support expanding the state's bottle deposit program to include all recyclable containers, including 64% of voters who strongly support the expansion. Support of the bottle Bill reflects a commitment to Connecticut voters and a step towards a greener future for the state.

Other states have already implemented updated bottle redemption programs and have seen improvements in their recycling rates. In 2017, the state of Michigan boasted a return rate of over 91% after increasing their deposit fee to 10 cents. Passing the improved Bottle Bill would put

Connecticut on par with neighboring states who have already transitioned to higher redemption fees.

CTLCV urges the committee to **SUPPORT HB 5340** in order to keep vital recycling facilities operating and more recyclable materials out of landfills. Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on this bill.

Sincerely,

Lori Brown

Executive Director

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