

Concerning Bottle Bill Ammendments: Testimony of Stacy Bradt Owner/Operator

Duanesburg Redemption Bottle & Can Return Inc.
10105 Western Tpke, Delanson NY
bradtstacy@gmail.com (518) 763-1219
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Joint Legislative Hearing/Environmental Conservation,

I opened my redemption center in 2013, and am currently in my eleventh year of business. In the first years, although a new business with fewer customers than now, I was able to make a decent wage working 40-50 hours per week, and employed 3 or 4 other people from our neighboring communities. Since then, I have been forced to drastically cut payroll and work extreme amounts of unpaid overtime while handling a Lot more in volume at the same rate of pay. Even with owning my own building and not having rent to pay, I have not been able to afford to give myself any raises in all those years. Dramatic yearly raises in minimum wage, inflation affects on other overhead expenses, and the lack of maintenance on the Bottle Bill has left our industry severely oppressed.

Meanwhile, as NYS has profitted over 1.6 Billion dollars in the unredeemed fund, our industry is at a critical boiling point. The red lights are flashing and the sirens are sounding! More than 150 Redemption centers in NYS have closed in the last 2 years (nearly 25%) due to lack of funds and the forced

handling of non-redeemable containers. Our waste management dumps are filled to overflowing and creating a waste management crisis. We have many, many more beverage bottles in circulation now than ever before. There are many new flavors and brands of drinks that have the potential to create new, added revenue in the redemption industry, allowing redemption centers to grow and expand, which would in turn make more money for NYS. Some people would still choose to not redeem out of laziness or not caring about or needing the refund, hence increasing the profit for all entities involved. As well, the thousands of non-profit organizations across NYS like fire departments, food pantries, schools, animal shelters, etc who rely heavily on bottle donations would receive double the help that they so desperately need!

I beg of you in this EMERGENCY Situation to please remember the K.I.S method. (KEEP IT SIMPLE)! For several years, as we have waited for relief, we have witnessed the tossing back and forth of the ball between the legislators and Environmental Conservation, with no results! We NEED RESULTS....AND FAST! We need the Bottle Bill to be part of this years budget considerations.

Priority #1 should be to adjust the handling fee from the 16 year old 3.5 cents to 5.5 - 6 cents min, with a built in raise every so many years for inflation. You need to keep redemption centers open or the system will fail, which will result in a severe back up of trash, as well as many more NY small businesses and jobs lost.

Priority #2 should be to raise the redemption fee from 5c to

10c and add more items to the list of redeemable. Mixed alcohol drinks in cans, hard ciders, sports drinks and teas are the most overwhelming and easiest to add.

Just these two changes would make a world of difference for owners, citizens and the NYs trash system.

We understand that things become a bit trickier when it comes to wine bottles and liquor bottles. Those adjustments can come later when you are able to work out the details.

Keep it simple. Save redemption centers, support NY small business and non-profits, reduce the load on dumps, and make more profit starting this year!

Stacy Bradt

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