



Testimony of Charles Manning on Better Bottle Bill to Joint Legislative Budget Hearing January 28, 2026

I represent the Albany Unitarian Universalist Green Sanctuary Team (GST) a faith community committed to the “Respect For the Interdependent Web of All Existence of Which We Are A Part”. The GST focuses on action and education within Albany UU and environmental advocacy at the local, state, and national level. Governor Hochul’s decision to leave the proposed Bigger Better Bottle Bill out of her executive budget is a tremendous mistake. In fact, Governor Hochul had no mention of any efforts to address the state’s solid waste crisis.

The current ‘Bottle Bill’ needs modernization by increasing the 5-cent refundable deposit to 10-cents on an expanded set of eligible beverage containers to improve the collection and recycling rates of these items. The legislature must act and put the “Modernization of the Bottle Bill” into the Senate and Assembly Single House Budget Proposals.

New York’s Bottle Bill has been the state’s most effective recycling and litter prevention program. For example, in 2020, New York’s redemption rate was at 64%. According to the DEC the current Bottle Bill reduces roadside container litter by 70%, and in 2020, 5.5 billion containers were recycled in the state. These rates can be improved if the deposit is raised from to 10-cents. The modernized Bottle Bill will also produce \$100 million more revenue for the state which is why it belongs in the budget. Source :

https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202501/NYPIRG_Bottle_Bill_Release_1.28-merged.pdf.9

Not only would the expansion of the state’s Bottle Bill increase recycling rates and make New York’s environment and communities cleaner, it would also help municipal recycling programs that are currently facing a recycling crisis. Municipal recycling programs are especially struggling with glass containers in their recycling streams. When glass breaks in single stream curbside containers it can render much of the other materials unrecyclable for the municipality, or “contaminated”. The expansion of the Bottle Bill to include wine, spirits, and hard cider would take a significant amount of the containers that municipalities are struggling with off their hands. It is estimated that New York municipalities will save up to \$108 million with the expansion of the bottle bill. Source:

https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202504/BBBB_Muni_Savings_4.22.25.pdf

It is essential that New York addresses its waste issues with a fully modernized Bottle Bill in the state budget—one that increases the deposit and includes additional containers. In fact, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation has indicated that a modernized bottle redemption program is an essential component of the 10-year Solid Waste Management plan released last year. Assemblymember Deborah Glick and Senator Rachel May introduced a Bigger Better Bottle Bill (A.6543 and S.5684, respectively) in the 2025 legislative session. The language of this bill must be part of the one house budget proposals. A modernized Better Bottle Bill needs to include the following provisions.

- o Expanding the program to include wine, spirits, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages.
- o Increasing the deposit from 5-cents to 10-cents and use revenues to support recycling equity. States with higher deposit fees have higher redemption rates than states with a five-cent fee. In Michigan the deposit fee is 10-cents, and the redemption rate was 89% in 2019. Vermont has a 15-cent deposit on liquor bottles and the redemption rate for liquor containers was 83% in 2020. Increasing the deposit could also generate more revenues for the state, which can be used to address limits on redemption options in low-income communities and other litter and solid waste problems in such communities.
- o A 10-cent deposit incentivize returns for bottle consumers, there are thousands of individuals – canners- who support themselves and their families on the proceeds of returning containers. These canners have not had a raise since 1983!
- o Increasing the handling fee for redemption centers. The handling fee has not been raised since 2009 while costs have significantly increased. Redemption centers are a key component of the returnable container program and yet over 200 redemption centers have closed this past two years due to the lack of a handling fee increase.

Here are some outcomes expected by modernizing the Bottle Bill as found in ReLoop 2022 “Reimagining the Bottle Bill” report as it relates to New York.

- Increase recycling rate of beverage containers from 69% to 92%
- 5.4 billion additional beverage containers recycled
- Green House Gas equivalent of taking 72,000 cars off the road
- Up to 34% reduction in litter
- Addition of 4145 jobs

Our faith tradition calls for us to be stewards of the earth. We believe that all life is interdependent. From that perspective, our goal is to reduce the impact of humans on the environment. We urge you to include the provisions of the “Better Bottle Bill” in the budget because it supports our principles by reducing litter as well as addressing the solid waste disposal crisis.

Charles Manning.

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