



Testimony of Kurt Krumperman on Better Bottle Bill to Joint Legislative Budget Hearing January 28, 2026

I represent Zero Waste Capital District, a 501c3 organization that is a coalition of organizations and individual volunteers that focuses on outreach, education, and policy advocacy to build the future of sustainable waste management. 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.

During this 43rd anniversary of the initial implementation of New York's Bottle Deposit Law, the '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 (it is an Extended Producer Responsibility program that works). 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. But the Governor knows we can do better, and she should support this improvement. It is essential that Governor Hochul include an expansion of state's Returnable Container Act in the state budget. By including legislation that expands and modernizes the Bottle Bill, New York will lead the way on reducing waste, litter, and greenhouse gas emissions. And, the modernized Bottle Bill will produce from \$100 million more revenue for the state which is why it belongs in the budget. (Analysis by New York Public Interest Research Group Fund, "Four Decades of the Bottle Deposit Law; Successes and Steps Toward Modernization," January 2025, 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. (Analysis by Eunomia is New York State Case Study -Expanded Bottle Bill Impact on Municipal Collections, April 2025) Municipal recycling programs are particularly struggling with glass contaminating their recycling streams. When glass breaks in curbside containers it contaminates the rest of the materials and renders much of it unrecyclable for the municipality. The expansion of the Bottle Bill to include wine, spirits, and non-carbonated beverages, with a deposit increase from a nickel to a dime, will take a significant number of containers out of municipal The costs of recycling many of the containers that are not covered under the state's Bottle Law are too high for many municipalities. For example, the costs associated with collecting and processing PET plastic bottles and glass per ton are higher than revenues per ton for scrap material. Expanding the Bottle Bill would eliminate these costs for municipal programs by creating a financial incentive (the deposit) for consumers to return and an obligation (the law) for retailers to accept these containers, relieving the burden on local government recycling programs.

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. A deposit system that includes these additional containers dramatically reduces litter and solid waste that would otherwise be discarded. Many other states have already added these containers to their laws. For example, Maine's law covers all beverages except dairy products and unprocessed cider.
- 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. The impact of the nickel deposit that was approved in 1982 has eroded over time. A mere inflation update would likely make that deposit nearly 15-cents. It's past time for New York to raise its deposit to a dime. Not only does a 10-cent deposit incentivize returns for bottle consumers, there of thousands of individuals often marginalized workers, 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
- \$171 to \$349 million to the state for reinvestment in the collection and recycling infrastructure

A 2025 Sienna College opinion poll indicated significant support for the modernization of the Bottle Bill favored the increase of the bottle refundable deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents with that support strongest among lower income respondents. The modernized bottle bill directly addresses this problem at the source. Zero Waste Capital District has joined with hundreds of organizations statewide to urge Governor Hochul to include the modernized Bottle Bill in the executive budget. She did not. The legislature has a moral imperative to act strongly and loudly. The environment cannot wait. The canners cannot wait. The redemption centers cannot go another year without a rate increase. Now is the time.

Kurt Krumpelman, PhD.

Zero Waste Capital District Board Member and Public Policy Committee Chair

35 Constitution Dr.

Glenmont, New York 12077