**Testimony to the CGA Environment Committee**

**Modernizing Connecticut’s Bottle Bill**

(Date)

Dear Environment Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am writing to express my strong support for S.B. 1037: An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management, as it pertains to the Committee’s efforts to update and expand Connecticut’s Bottle Bill.

The Bottle Bill creates an effective incentive to recycle single-serve bottles and cans. Unfortunately, the program only covers beer, soda and water containers, leaving hundreds of juices, teas and sports drink brands without a refundable deposit. This includes liquor “nips” which are a nuisance and a significant source of litter our communities.

Additionally, the refundable deposit on covered containers has not been increased over time to keep up with inflation. Since the 5 cent deposit fails to create a strong financial incentive to recycle, many consumers simply throw their containers in the trash or recycle them through curbside recycling programs, which cost municipalities millions of dollars each year. States like Oregon and Michigan which have a 10 cent deposit achieved redemption rates upwards of 80% in just a few years.

S.B. 1037 amends Connecticut’s bottle bill to includes a series of timely updates which will help reduce litter and save towns money on recycling.

* **Increasing the deposit** from 5 cents to 10 cents will help to increase redemption rates. Giving individuals a measurable incentive to redeem their containers increases the likelihood that people will make a consistent effort.
* **Expanding the universe of containers** included in the Bottle Bill to include those frequently used by consumers will broaden the reach of the program to capture as many containers as possible. Increasing the categories of redeemable containers increases the probability that popular containers will make it to redemption.
* **Increase the handling fee-** the handling fee paid by the distributor for each container collected has also not been adjusted over time. Raising the handling fee will benefit retailers and redemption centers and help ensure that consumers have ample, convenient access to container redemption services.

Connecticut’s bottle bill is long overdue for an update. Modernizing this important recycling law will go a long way towards strengthening our state’s recycling infrastructure and saving towns money.

This bill will also be tremendously impactful for low income and under-served communities across the state. Individuals with limited access to transportation are put at a disadvantage especially when redemption centers are not readily accessible. Expanding the number of redemption centers around the state allows everyone to participate in the program. Creating an inclusive system that recognizes all members of the community is fundamental to success.

Recycling is a key indicator of a creative economy. Community emphasis on the importance of recycling shows a commitment to a cleaner environment. Additionally, the commitment to a cleaner environment reflects the desire to achieve a higher standard of living. Comprehensive and efficient recycling programs offer opportunities for the community to benefit financially. The development of effective recycling infrastructure supports local economies, creates jobs, and increases tax revenue. Increased tax revenues can be invested back into the community, creating a substantial benefit in the long run.

In closing, I support S.B. 1037 and believe this offers a meaningful step forward on reducing litter and increasing recycling across Connecticut. I applaud the Environment Committee for taking up this important issue and respectfully urge the committee to pass this important legislation, as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

(your name and affiliation)

(your address)