

**SOUTH SHORE
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**Testimony to Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
on Bottle Deposit/Redemption related bills:**

- 1. Support with comments H2875/S1752, S1777**
 - 2. Oppose with comments H646, H2880**
- 10/27/2015**

1. Support with comments H2875/S1752, S177, conditional expansion of bottle deposit-redemption system

The managers who handle the trash and recycling for our fourteen member towns have always been strong proponents of expanding the current bottle deposit-redemption system. This system succeeds in recovering about 70% of beer and carbonated beverage containers, with additional containers recycled through curbside, dropoff and commercial recycling programs. In contrast, only about 30% of containers lacking the deposit incentive are recycled. The rest are disposed or littered, at great cost to our municipalities and our environment.

Perhaps the most helpful element of the current system to municipal solid waste programs is the **clean separation of glass bottles**. Glass is heavy, and thus costly for municipalities when disposed with trash. It is also becoming troublesome in municipal recycling programs, especially single stream.

- When glass is **mixed** with other recyclables, it is **very difficult to pull out**, especially if it is wet. Glass recyclers have great difficulty getting it clean enough to make into new glass, so it goes to **lower use, at higher cost**.
- At the single stream sorting facility, the **shards get stuck in other recyclables**, notably paper, causing damage to sorting equipment and **degrading the quality of the bales** that are intended to be made into new products. Together with other factors, this is **driving up the cost of recycling**.
- Therefore, it is most desirable to **collect the glass separately**, as it is in the deposit system. In fact, adding a deposit to **wine and other glass bottles** would improve quality and value of both recovered glass and paper significantly.

Aluminum is a valuable commodity. It is **energy intensive and environmentally destructive** to make from dirt. It requires the equivalent of a **half a can of fuel** to manufacture an aluminum can from scratch, **twenty times** that needed to recycle a can into a new can. Recycling reduces the need to purify bauxite, and curbs greenhouse gas emissions more than any other recycled commodity.

Consumer demand for beverages in **plastic bottles** has surged in the past two decades. **Each American** now consumes, on average, well over **100 water bottles** each year (not counting soda, juice and other drinks).¹ Plastic bottle manufacture requires about **2 oz. fuel** equivalent per container, and **demand for recycled PET is strong** and growing domestically. Maximizing their recovery through the deposit system is more important than ever, reducing environmental impact and **creating US jobs**.

These bills give **opportunity for the private sector to demonstrate that they can recover valuable recyclables** as efficiently as the deposit system over several years. In my opinion, the **metrics proposed in both bills should be looked at for practicality and applicability**.

- Calculating recovery rates for specific materials (proposed in H2875) may be tricky.
- Recycling rates (as proposed in S1777) have not been used as a metric for a few years, as the material mix in our waste stream has changed dramatically in this century. We now refer to **disposed tons per household** for town-to-town and year-to-year comparisons.
- Detailed **waste audits** are done every three years at our **six energy-from-waste facilities**. They **discern deposit from nondeposit containers** in their evaluations. This may be a **more relevant standard** by which to determine whether the deposit system should be expanded. The summary of the 2010 audits are pasted below:

		As Reported in 2010 Waste Characterization Study:						Volume weighted Average	est. annual Mass. tonnage
Extended Waste Categories		Saugus	North Andove	Millbury	SEMASS	Haverhill	Springfield		
2.0	Plastics	15.4%	15.4%	16.3%	13.4%	11.6%	13.5%	14.0%	753,619
	PET Beverage Containers (non-MA deposit containers) means clear or colored PET beverage bottles other than MA deposit containers (water, flavored water, juice, sports drinks, etc.). When marked for identification, it bears the number – 1 in the center of the triangular recycling symbol and may also bear the letters –PETE or –PET. A PET container usually has a small dot left from the manufacturing process, not a seam.								
2.1		0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	30,969
	Plastic MA Deposit Beverage Containers means plastic beverage containers subject to MA’s bottle bill and marked as deposit containers in Massachusetts.								
2.3		0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	7,487
3.0	Metals	5.5%	5.1%	5.7%	5.5%	5.7%	4.6%	5.5%	295,684
	Aluminum Beverage Containers (non-MA deposit containers) means beverage containers made from aluminum other than MA deposit containers.								
3.1		0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	3,089
	Aluminum MA Deposit Beverage Containers means metal beverage containers subject to MA’s bottle bill and marked as deposit containers in Massachusetts.								
3.2		0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	6,700
4.0	Glass	2.9%	2.7%	3.3%	1.7%	1.8%	1.4%	2.2%	118,540
	Glass Beverage Containers (non-MA deposit containers) includes wine bottles, nonalcoholic beverage containers, liquor bottles, etc.								
4.1		1.1%	1.0%	1.1%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	37,528
	Other Glass Packaging Containers (non-MA deposit containers) includes glass food and non-food containers such as sauces, jars, perfume containers, etc.								
4.2		0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	24,873
	Glass MA Deposit Beverage Containers means glass beverage containers subject to MA’s bottle bill and marked as deposit containers in Massachusetts.								
4.3		0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	19,613

S1777’s provision for **deposit and handling fee adjustments based on CPI** is wise. The value of a nickel is far lower than it was in 1983. Stagnant handling fees have driven many redemption centers out of

business.

Oppose with comments H646, H2880 (replace bottle deposit-redemption with a 1¢ fee)

While there are some **elements that would be a useful adjunct to two other waste reduction bills**, the SSRC vigorously opposes the elimination of the existing bottle deposit system, and the **addition of responsibilities to municipalities**, as proposed in H646 and H2880, for the following reasons:

- Elimination of the bottle deposit system would **add significant amounts of glass to our recycling streams**, which is becoming increasingly difficult to manage. As noted above, this material is best kept separate, where it has the most value.
- Municipalities already do **more than their share in managing consumer product waste**. They provide **access** to comprehensive recycling to about 80% of Mass. households, far more than the commercial sector in both residential and non-residential locations. Many municipalities lack the staff to pursue and administer competitive grants such as those proposed in these bills.
- Adding a one cent fee to the small universe of packaging proposed in these bills would generate an estimated **\$30 million/year** (this number should be fleshed out more accurately), **half which would go to the General Fund**.
- **Far more scrutiny of the provisions of these bills** needs to be carried out before contemplating its substitution for the current system. I would pose the following questions to start:
 - How much would it cost to establish **effective programs that do not rely on municipal governments** to implement as envisioned by this proposal?
 - The **Marshfield Fair** provides a hint as to the costs of comprehensive recycling at events. The SSRC, with assistance from MassDEP, started a recycling program at the Fair for bottles, cans and cardboard in 2004. The continuation of this program requires **a large volunteer effort, and the donation of containers and hauling** by a recycling service provider (who retains the commodity value). To create a truly sustainable recycling system would cost the Fair at least **\$2,500/year** that it doesn't have. If all drink containers carried a refundable deposit, that would cover the cost. With so many non-deposit containers in the mix, it is impractical to separate them.
 - Would the amount available for appropriation be distributed effectively enough to create the **needed infrastructure changes for both**



collection and processing to achieve **the high recovery rate** the current deposit-redemption system does? I would especially question this if H646, which **sunsets the fee after three years**, were enacted.

- How would the **efficacy of a substituted recycling system be measured** if implemented?
- How would the administration of this ambitious program be **reliably funded** for the long term? (As noted, H646 sunsets the fee in three years).
- Since redemption isn't proposed, **why doesn't the fee extend to other products and packaging commonly littered**, such as cigarette packs and butts, fast food packaging, candy and chip wrappers, etc?
- If **municipalities** are anticipated to be "partners" in this program, **why aren't they represented in proportion to their intended role on the proposed Solid Waste Management Board?**
- What would prevent the proposed Municipal Recycling Enhancement Fund from **not being appropriated to its stated purpose**, or even **eliminated**, as the Clean Environment Fund was when it existed?
- What if it is passed, and is **found to be ineffective?** There is no mechanism to bring back the current redemption system in that case.

H2880 could be effective as an adjunct to the [Universal Recycling](#) bill, H3420, as a funding source. It could also be incorporated in the [Packaging Product Stewardship](#) bill, H3418. To be effective, though, it would have to be much more aggressive in the scope of packaging it covers, and **less reliant on municipalities** fighting for grant money to enact the needed infrastructure changes. This bill **The South Shore Recycling Cooperative urges the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy to amend and report S1777 out favorably and soon**. Further, we ask that TUE **take no action on H646 and H2880**.

Respectfully,



Claire L. Galkowski, Executive Director

¹ Container Recycling Institute <http://www.container-recycling.org/index.php/issues/bottled-water>