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South Shore support for Bottle Bill update swells

The South Shore Recycling Cooperative joined most of its fourteen member towns in signing a resolution supporting expansion the Massachusetts Bottle Bill. The proposed update will address the unforeseen explosion of bottled water and other noncarbonated single serve drinks that were not anticipated in the 1982 legislation.

The SSRC Board voted unanimously to direct its state legislators to vote in favor of bill H3515, which updates the 27 year old Massachusetts Beverage Container Deposit Law. Chief elected officials in the Towns of **Abington, Cohasset, Duxbury, Hanson, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Norwell, Plymouth, Scituate, Whitman**, and 70 other Massachusetts municipalities have gone on record as supporting this measure. **Weymouth's** Mayor Kay publicly acclaimed the bill as well.

"The potential positive impact on the municipal waste stream is enormous," stated SSRC Chairman Merle Brown of Cohasset. "Every item which is returned for a deposit instead of being managed by our member towns represents a savings. That, on top of the environmental benefits, makes this bill a win-win for all our towns."

"The SSRC has voiced support for this measure for about ten years," said SSRC Executive Director Claire Sullivan. "It is the state's most successful recycling law. Over 75% of containers covered by deposits are recycled. About the same amount of non-deposit containers wind up as litter or trash. This is a terrible waste of resources, and is costly to our towns."

MassDEP recently released a study showing entitled "**Benefits of an Expanded Bottle Bill on Municipal Refuse and Recycling costs and Revenues**", which estimates that current net costs to Massachusetts municipalities to manage non-deposit beverage containers at \$4.3 million to \$7 million/year. (<http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/exbbmuni.doc>)

According to **MassRecycle**, Inc. (the Massachusetts Recycling Coalition), since the Bottle Bill's inception in 1983, more than 30 billion containers have been redeemed, contributing to a healthier environment, cleaner communities, and a stronger economy. However, many newer noncarbonated beverages, which barely existed in 1983, now comprise nearly a third of all beverage containers sold. The Bottle Bill has not been updated or expanded since its creation, except for a small and now inadequate increase in the handling fee paid to redemption centers.

Adding these beverages to the bottle bill will effectively triple their recycling rate, diverting millions of bottles and cans from trash cans and roadsides to new products. It will also add at least \$15 million in anticipated unclaimed deposits to the State's battered General Fund.

Other supporters of the update include the **Mass. League of Women Voters, Mass. Sierra Club, MassPIRG, the Environmental League of Mass., and the Cities of Boston and Worcester.**

Most important to the SSRC member towns, updating the Bottle Bill will reduce the cost of managing this material as litter and waste at the taxpayers' and ratepayers' expense.

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