SOUTH SHORE RECYCLING COOPERATIVE
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Testimony to Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy in support of expanded bottle deposits, H3676. H3690, and S2104

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The South Shore Recycling Cooperative is a government organization which supports the solid waste managers of eighteen municipalities (see footer, p. 2). Our Board has steadfastly supported updates to the container deposit system since 2002.

Expansion and deposit value adjustment **would shift the cost and operational burden** of this waste stream, both in our **recycling and disposal systems**, to the **producers that profit** from their sale and the **consumers who choose to purchase** the non-essential products covered in these bills. It also creates **more and cleaner feedstocks for new packaging**.

The past six years have brought the **highest recycling costs** our municipalities have ever experienced, **topping that of disposal** for several months. The single most costly material in the municipal waste stream is **glass**.

- Glass is about 20% of our recycling stream, and 2.2% of our disposed tons[1]
- The only company that recycled Mass. glass into bottles closed shop in 2018. All our towns' glass has since been **crushed and mixed with gravel** (downcycling) at a cost of **$60-80/ton**.
- In 2020, recycling glass cost all our towns about **$200,000** to process and haul. **Wine and liquor bottles** compose the vast majority of this material (see photo from Kingston Transfer Station).

- **Glass shards** in the mixed stream get into the other materials during sorting, **degrading** bale quality, **reducing** values, **damaging** both processor and end user equipment, and **raising** costs.
- At 2.2% of disposed tonnage, our towns paid over **$150,000** to landfill and incinerate over **1800 tons** of glass in 2020. Collection and hauling are additional costs.
- Glass **doesn't burn**, so it doesn't contribute to the electricity generated at our waste-to-energy facilities. It all ultimately ends up in **bottom ash**, which is sent to our rapidly **dwindling landfills**. As Mass. landfills all close this decade, ash and trash will have to be hauled to facilities in other

[1] Mass DEP Summary of Waste Combustor Class II Recycling Program Waste Characterization Studies (Includes 2010, 2013, 2016 & 2019 Data)

states that are willing accept it.

- Manufacturing glass requires very high heat, and thus has a **high carbon footprint**. Making it from recycled cullet requires about **25% less energy**[2], though it is still a significant emitter.

Raising the deposit from its **40-year-old level of 5¢** would also drive recovery. Redemption rates have plummeted from **71% in 2010 to 38% in 2022**, the lowest in the US. This is in part due to the low value of a nickel. Thus, **most of this material is flowing through municipal disposal and recycling systems**.

Only about **75-77% of residents**[3] opt for or have access to municipal recycling, leaving about **2 million residents without convenient access**. This includes condos and apartments, public housing, and residents of "washed hands" communities that don't provide disposal service, such as our Member Town of Hull. Much of the material is generated in **non-residential settings.**

Miniatures pose problems by **contaminating our recycling streams**, as they are too small to properly sort. This adds disposal cost and lowers bale values. They also are causing problems in **stormwater drainage systems**.

Expanding the universe of containers that are covered by our successful deposit-redemption system, and raising the deposit to 10¢ solve several problems:

- Reducing municipal recycling and disposal costs
- Increasing the recovery and container-to-container recycling of valuable materials
- Reducing the climate and other environmental impacts of using earth-derived raw materials, and
- Extending the lives of our shrinking disposal infrastructure

On behalf of the South Shore Recycling Cooperative, I respectfully request that the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy report S2149, S2215, and H3284 out favorably.

Sincerely,

Claire L. Galkowski, Executive Director, South Shore Recycling Cooperative

[2] Glass Packaging Institute https://www.gpi.org/why-recycle-glass

[3] MassDEP https://www.mass.gov/doc/2020-municipal-solid-waste-recycling-survey-responses/download