



*February 25, 2014*

The Honorable Robert M. Hartwell  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy  
Vermont State House  
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5301

**Testimony in Opposition to Vermont Senate Bill 208**

Dear Chairman Hartwell:

On behalf of the Glass Packaging Institute (GPI), I am offering the following testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 208, which would remove liquor containers from the state's container recycling refund program.

GPI is the North American trade association for the glass container manufacturers, glass recyclers, and suppliers of materials, equipment and transport to the industry. GPI's members recognize the importance of supporting sustainability initiatives including conserving energy, saving raw materials, reducing air emissions (including NOx, SOx, PM and greenhouse gases such as CO2) and being fully committed to "Reduce / Reuse" in all aspects of plant operations e.g. water, cardboard, lubricants, electricity, etc.

When glass plants can increase the levels of recycled glass as part of the overall batch mix, they can reduce furnace temperatures, resulting in reduced energy use and lower greenhouse gas emissions. This is also true of other packaging and manufacturing industries. For glass, one ton of carbon dioxide is reduced for every six tons of recycled container glass used in the manufacturing process. Energy use at the glass plants also drop about 2-3% for every 10% recycled glass used in the manufacturing process.

GPI has established a 50% recycled content goal for the manufacture of new glass containers. Success in achieving that goal is largely dependent on the strength of the recovery systems that generate recycled materials purchased by our industry. GPI estimates that more 65%-80% of recycled glass comes from the 10 states with beverage container refund programs.

A prime reason for the success of these programs is that collected containers are kept separate from other recyclables, drastically reducing contamination and providing them the best opportunity to return to a manufactured product.

The most successful and robust beverage container refund programs not only provide environmental and energy related benefits, but may also contribute to increased employment in the greater recycling industry. A recently issued report by the Container Recycling Institute (CRI) found that, depending on system parameters, these programs create 11-38 times more jobs than a curbside recycling system for beverage containers. (*Morawski and Morris, Returning to Work: Understanding the Domestic Jobs Impacts from Different Methods of Recycling Beverage Containers, December 2011*)

These programs are indicative of the strong market that glass recovered in bottle bill programs have nationwide. Vermont's beverage container recycling refund program is among the oldest and most effective recycling programs in the nation, established in 1972, and recovering an estimated 85% of covered beverage containers. Liquor, along with all covered beverage containers, plays a prominent role in the program's success. Importantly, while beverage containers may make a smaller percentage of the overall solid waste stream, they are also estimated in many areas of the country to constitute up to 30% of the litter stream. Keeping liquor containers in this successful program will help to ensure Vermont's litter is kept at already reduced levels.

The states of Maine and Iowa currently include liquor containers in their recycling refund programs, and in an effort to boost recycling of beverage containers, the province of Ontario also added liquor bottles to their existing recycling refund program in 2007.

Additionally, the CRI report finds that, ton for ton, beverage container refund programs create at least five times more jobs in container collection, sorting and transport than in garbage collecting, hauling and landfilling. The CRI Report concluded that the principal reason beverage container refund programs create more jobs is that they recover more of the "target" material. Another CRI study showed that not only do the 10 bottle bill states provide the vast majority of recovered beverage containers, but they also recover almost as much other recycled materials as the other 40 non bottle bill states combined.

Unlike beverage container refund programs, curbside and drop-off programs do not have a demonstrated ability to reduce litter from public areas. However, curbside and drop-off programs can collect a broader spectrum of materials, and therefore work in conjunction with beverage container refund programs to achieve a greater overall improvement in recycling. Additionally, the wear and tear on capital-intensive sorting and processing machines at recycling recovery facilities can be greatly reduced if a portion of covered beverage containers are removed from the process.

A Study issued earlier this year, conducted by *Resource Recycling Systems (RRS)*, found that recycling refund programs are compatible with singles stream programs, and together, can increase overall recycling rates for states that

implement them by 11%. Vermont is currently enjoying the benefits of both programs, and we strongly urge the Committee to consider the program's success, without future alteration.

GPI would like to thank the Committee for their consideration of our comments in opposition to Senate Bill 208. Please consider GPI and its member companies a resource and advocate for recycling related issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn M. Bragg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'B'.

Lynn M. Bragg  
President

Cc:

Senator Diane Snelling, Vice Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee

Senator Peter W. Galbraith

Senator Mark A. MacDonald

Senator John Rodgers, Clerk

Katie Pickens, Committee Assistant