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Testimony for the Joint Senate and Assembly Public Hearing on Recycling

Presented by Jeff Williams, New York Farm Bureau Director of Public Policy
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Thank you Senator Kaminsky and Assemblyman Englebright for allowing me to submit comments, on behalf of New York Farm Bureau members, on the topic of recycling.

- New York Farm Bureau recognizes the significance recycling has on our environment and would like to convey our support for the proposed expansion of the current bottle deposit statute to include deposits on non-carbonated beverage containers, such as sports drinks bottles, iced tea bottles and water bottles. We greatly appreciate the Chairmen's support on this issue.
- New York farmers continue to support the expansion of the existing bottle redemption law to include additional beverage containers. However, we do not support including wine, milk, fruit juice and cider bottles in this expansion. A quick glance at upstate recycling and redemption rates indicates that upstate residents, when motivated by a bottle deposit return, have high redemption rates. New York Farm Bureau members believe that the expansion of the current bottle deposit bill will assist in controlling litter and providing additional incentives to the general public to recycle.
- New York's wine industry due to the onerous requirements to manage bottle returns, such as, staff, space to collect and store as well as proper disposal of the large quantities of glass currently are not fit to take on this additional regulation.
- New York Farm Bureau members engaged in animal agriculture have concerns about the animal health aspects of the general public's increasing tendency to throw single serve water bottles and other beverage containers out of car windows. These bottles, particularly the light plastic ones, are picked up by the wind and blown into farmer's fields. This poses as a hazard to animals when crops are harvested and turned into animal feed. Farmers seeking to grow hay for the equine industry, in particular, are extremely supportive of the bottle deposit expansion as the equine market especially for breeding and racing purposes is even more insistent on "clean" and high-quality products.
- Including wine, milk, fruit juice and cider bottles in the expansion would negatively impact the agriculture industry and, it happens to be rare to find empty milk, wine, fruit juice or cider containers tossed on the roadsides or littered throughout the state.

- However, farmers are finding themselves frustrated with the large presence of litter lining the fields in upstate New York and Long Island
- New York Farm Bureau believes a portion of the unclaimed bottle deposits be devoted to agriculture environmental projects and farm education outreach within the Environmental Protection Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.