

January 31, 2022

Sean Basinski
1073 First Ave #44
New York, NY 10022

Re: Expansion of NYS Bottle Bill

Dear NYS Committee on Environmental Conservation,

I am an attorney and environmental activist who is on the board of Sure We Can, a non-profit organization in Brooklyn that helps provide a livelihood to hundreds of individuals who earn a living collecting and redeeming beverage bottles and cans in New York City.

These individuals – known as “canners” - are on the front lines of the struggle to preserve our environment and, in fact, to protect our earth from the devastating impact of climate change.

Since its passage in 1983, the New York State bottle bill has been an unmitigated success, resulting in hundreds of millions of tons of glass, aluminum and plastic being kept out of our roadsides, streambeds, and landfills. However, after decades, the law needs two major updates, which will not only benefit the environment but also many thousands of people who rely upon the provisions of that bill to earn a living.

The first needed change is an expansion of the covered beverage containers. While beer bottles and soda cans were *de rigueur* when the bill was passed, today we see dozens of varieties of more popular drinks, from flavored water to iced tea to juice concoctions. The Bottle Bill must be updated to include these drinks, as well as to include wine and liquor bottles, who for some reason were never included.

The second change is to increase the deposit from 5 cents, the original amount, whose value has been eroded by inflation and the passage of time to almost zero. I believe that a doubling of the redemption amount will encourage more regular consumers to redeem their bottles and cans. Of course, it will also benefit the canners of our city, who often labor for hours of back-breaking work in the streets to earn a paltry sum.

These changes will also benefit the state itself, as 80% of the unclaimed funds are remitted to the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance each quarter.

These changes to the NYS Bottle Bill are long overdue. In fact, they are urgent. I implore you to consider them in your deliberations over legislation and budget in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Sean Basinski