

**Morrisville Beverage
81 Bridget Street
Morrisville, VT 05661
Ethan Hayes – General Manager**

**Testimony in Support of H.158 May 3rd, 2023
Senate Finance Committee**

Thank you for inviting me to speak today. My name is Ethan Hayes, and I am the General Manager of Morrisville Beverage, an independent beverage store, Vt liquor agency and certified bottle redemption center that processes approximately 4.8 million deposit containers per year.

We support H.158 and its expansion of additional containers into the deposit system and the structure it puts into place to support expansion and modernization. We believe that keeping more containers in the closed loop benefits the environment, reduces supply chain issues, and provides an incentive for Vermonters to recycle their containers unlike single stream bins.

In 2021 our company invested significantly in upgrading our facility and purchased new bulk Reverse Vending Technology to allow us to process an additional volume of containers, increase efficiency, and reduce fraud. Prior to October 2021 we were a hand count only facility with two full time employees. Unlike traditional RVM's the new model allows customers to redeem up to 100 + aluminum cans, and plastic bottles combined at once thereby reducing wait times, and accounting for the many brands and container sizes. This process also reduces the amount of square footage dedicated to sorting and bagging as the machine compacts all containers and provides an accurate count to the pickup agent. The containers are automatically sorted by material type and dropped into bins for ease of pickup.

We still employ all the employees we had prior to our upgrades and pay them well above minimum wage. Instead of spending hours sorting through the hundreds of distributor sorts our employees are now assisting customers more directly, maintaining a cleaner facility, and providing much needed labor in the front of our store. We have also instituted a bag drop service and established relationships with several charity groups for bottle drives and pickups at their drop off locations.

Our investment in new technology has allowed us to be prepared for an increased volume of containers that an expanded bottle bill would cover. It also helps us reduce fraud by using the barcodes to verify if a container is in fact redeemable.

Provisions in H.158 assist in this process by requiring barcodes to be placed on all containers, and for the bar codes to be made available prior to the product being sold.

To assist in ramping up the expansion it may be beneficial for a grant program to be established to assist redemption centers in upgrading their facilities, implementing RVM technology and opening new points of redemption in underserved areas.

Enacting H.158 will move the bottle bill to the modern era and help Vermont do its part in closing the loop, engage distributors and manufacturers in the process, make redemption convenient and sustainable into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.





