



February 25, 2014

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

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 208

To the Honorable Bob Hartwell and Members of the Committee,

Strategic Materials (SMI) is a leading North American recycling company, with facilities located across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. We are the largest recycled glass processor on the continent and one of the recipients of clean glass coming out of Vermont. I am writing today to voice SMI's opposition to making any changes that would lead to the repeal or shrinkage of Vermont's Container Deposit Program. As a result, SMI opposes those provisions in S 208 that would remove liquor containers from the bottle bill and reduce the number of containers covered under the program by limiting the size of covered containers to 1 liter or less. We believe that passage of such measures set out to do unnecessary harm to the bottle bill.

- The Bottle Bill is often regarded as one of Vermont's most successful recycling program. With overall recovery rates around 85%, these results are hard to argue.
- It's important that Vermont keep the bottle bill in its current state because glass collected by this method provides a virtually clean feedstock that are turned into beneficial products for the glass container and other industries. Glass liquor bottles are currently returned at a 80.9% return rate.
- Of the glass that would be collected through curbside, it would have higher rates of contamination resulting from being commingled with the nasty bits that end up in single-stream recycling. Glass collected by this method could have up to 30% contamination.
- Industries that use recyclables as raw materials have high demand and high standards for the materials they use therefore; the amount of contamination in recyclables is very important. Curbside materials do not necessarily provide the level of cleanliness suitable for industry. Removing liquor containers from the bottle bill program will not only move material from a low contamination stream to a high contamination stream; it will also reduce the value the glass industry would be able to pay for the material as we would have to invest in cleaning it up to meet industry standards.

Lastly, it is important to note that materials recovered as a result of the bottle bill in Vermont represent a multi-million dollar export for the state and that there are many viable markets for these materials throughout New England and beyond. Because the glass, plastic, and aluminum materials coming out of Vermont are so clean, companies like SMI are able to pay top dollar for these products.

SMI urges you to amend Vermont S. 208 and leave the deposit program in place for liquor containers and containers over one liter in size. If not it lead to reduced recycling, more litter, reduced income for the redemption industry, and less clean quality glass for the glass recycling industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Senate Bill 208. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 281-647-2774 or at rabramowitz@strategicmaterials.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard M. Abramowitz', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Richard M Abramowitz
Vice President of Government Affairs

CC: Senator Diane Snelling, Vice Chair
Senator Peter W. Galbraith
Senator Mark A. MacDonald
Senator John Rodgers, Clerk
Katie Pickens, Committee Assistant (kpickens@leg.state.vt.us)