

To: Senator Hartwell and the members of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee

From: Nancy Schulz, Executive Director, Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition

Re: S.208

Date: 2/ 25/ 14

As the executive director of the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition (VBPC), I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony regarding S.208. The VBPC is a statewide, member-supported, non-profit organization that works, through education and advocacy, to transform Vermont into a safer, friendlier place in which to bicycle and walk. The VBPC is opposed to S.208, a bill that will result in much more trash on Vermont's roadways because citizens will no longer have an incentive to return liquor bottles.

In the years since the bottle bill went into effect in 1972, the volume of litter on Vermont's roads has dropped by 30%. That decrease has been very good news for bicyclists, walkers, runners, construction workers, people on horseback and others for whom broken glass is a very real hazard. When encountering broken glass, a cyclist must either ride through it and risk a flat tire or swerve and risk a collision with a motor vehicle. Neither choice is a safe one, yet bicyclists in Vermont face these choices on a daily basis. More glass on Vermont's roadways from unreturned liquor bottles will increase the hazards for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Because most Vermont roads lack sidewalks, pedestrians must walk in the shoulder or in the travel lane, if a shoulder isn't present. Under these circumstances, broken glass presents a danger, especially in low-light conditions.

Equestrians, too, are threatened. If a horse steps on broken glass, the wound could cause the animal to lose a significant amount of blood. An infection could develop and, in some cases, the horse could die. Harm to (or loss of) a prized animal due to broken glass is a scenario that should be avoided.

Roadside trash is aesthetically offensive, contaminates waterways, and harms wildlife. It sends a message that community members don't care enough about their towns to keep their roadsides clean. Please don't weaken the bottle bill and create a situation that will result in more trash on Vermont's roadways. Thank you.