

February 25, 2014

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

Testimony in Opposition to Vermont Senate Bill 208

Dear Chairman Hartwell:

On behalf of TOMRA and our customers, I am offering the following testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 208, which would remove containers larger than 1 liter and liquor containers from the state's deposit-return recycling program.

In all deposit states, including Vermont, TOMRA works with beverage producers, wholesalers and retailers providing collection technology; pick-up and processing services; and deposit/fee accounting.

Our Essex, VT operation employs 20 persons to processes 90% of the containers redeemed in Vermont. This equates to 13.5 million pounds of recyclables collected through the bottle-bill every year. 100% of which is sold to manufacturers for re-use because of its quality.

A prime reason for the success of this program is that consumers are incentivized and engaged. Further, redemption is conveniently provided where beverages are sold. The high rate of redemption proves this point – and public opinion runs consistently 'highly favorable'.

Deposit systems reverse the logistics of beverage sales, enabling us to operate a system as efficient, but more effective, than curbside collection. Removing containers from this system is counter-intuitive to the recycling ethic and economics. We need more opportunities to recycle – not less. A reduction in volume resulting from the proposed bill will actually hurt the economics for both retailers and redemption centers. Both use fixed capital, like Reverse Vending Machines, to operate. Less volume will put their leases at risk. On the other-hand, more volume will only improve their economics as the assets are already in-place.

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Beverage containers are collected separately from other recyclables, drastically reducing contamination and providing them the best opportunity to return to a manufactured product. State sold liquor bottles should continue to be recovered through a system that ensures 100% recycling and focusses on cost-improvements. Never accepting landfilling as an option.

Originally, the system was designed to help eliminate roadside litter. Today, it is highly regarded for the high volumes and high-quality material generated annually for re-use. We invite you to our plant to see for yourselves.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments in opposition to Senate Bill 208.

Charles W. Riegler Jr.
Senior Vice President, Governmental Affairs
TOMRA Vermont

LEADING THE RESOURCE REVOLUTION

Cc: Senator Diane Snelling, Vice Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee
Senator Peter W. Galbraith
Senator Mark A. MacDonald
Senator John Rodgers, Clerk
Katie Pickens, Committee Assistant

Attachment

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