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*Full-Service Trade Association Representing Dairy Processors, Manufacturers and Distributors Since 1928*

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To: Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

Chair: The Honorable Christopher Bray

From: Paul M. Harvey, Director of Regulatory Affairs

Date: March 23, 2022

Subj: An Act Relating to the Beverage Container Redemption System

Memorandum of Opposition

Vermont House Bill 175

An Act Relating to the Beverage Container Redemption System

Northeast Dairy Foods Association, Inc. is a full-service trade association consisting of dairy processors, manufacturers, and distributors who conduct business in the Northeast United States, including Vermont. Our members are also the customers of dairy producers in the region, including Vermont.

Our association is **opposed** to House Bill 175, which would require a bottle deposit on most beverage product containers. These regulations would create additional costs for both businesses and consumers alike. While we **appreciate and support** the exemption for milk, dairy, and plant-based beverages, many of our processors and manufacturers also bottle non-milk and non-dairy beverages. We **oppose** this piece of legislation for the following reasons:

- House Bill 175 does not account for the significant strides the agricultural and processing industry has taken to improve the sustainability of its containers and processes. As an industry, agriculture has taken significant, proactive measures to obtain, secure, and develop quality packaging materials that are already either recyclable or sustainable.

- Requiring food and beverage manufacturers to absorb additional costs would unnecessarily place additional risk on businesses who are already struggling to compete with other present economic factors, such as, historic levels of inflation and transportation costs brought on by both national and international circumstances. Implementing such legislation at this current time would also hurt consumers during this unprecedented period of inflation and economic uncertainty.

- Consumers like curbside recycling programs. It does not make sense to take containers that are now being recycled, impose a deposit and force consumers, and grocery stores, to take them back under the proposed bottle law.

When crafting this legislation, we ask every consideration be given to the health of vital Vermont industries, like beverage bottling, and those who are dependent on it as a way of life. Protecting our economy and our environment is a difficult balance, but it is possible when government and business work together for the common good.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our position.

Respectfully,

Paul M. Harvey

Director of Regulatory Affairs