

Dear Chair Sheldon:

As the operator of one of the busiest redemption centers in Vermont, I'm writing to offer you my thoughts regarding H.158.

It seems that each year over these past few legislative sessions there has been discussion in Montpelier about expanding the products/containers that should have a deposit but each year the legislation falls short. Hopefully this year legislation can finally get passed that has absolutely no negative impact on any Vermonter.

First and foremost is the suggestion by anyone that the deposit on a container is a "tax" on Vermonters. This is a ridiculous claim seeing as when Killington Ski Area rents a pair of skis Killington requires a deposit to ensure they get the skis back. Clearly, Killington is not assessing a "tax" and every person's deposit is refunded when the skis are returned.

The deposit on beverage containers is the exact same principle, if a person wants their deposit back they just need to return the container. If a person chooses to dispose of returnable containers in their household trash or on the side of the road then they made their own choice to throw money away.

In regards to the impact on the operators of redemption centers across Vermont I can state with absolute certainty that every redemption center should benefit from an expansion of the redemption program. If any redemption center operator disagrees then they should operate another business. H.158 as written will make sorting easy and free up 75% of the floor space needed for sorting and making that space available for additional storage. In short, a redemption center should be able to double their volume of business while having the same labor costs and using the same amount of space. The only area of concern would be how Tomra operates but we are already dealing with those issues and I've proposed that in a new agreement with Tomra that there should be a financial penalty that Tomra will pay to a redemption center when Tomra does not pick up containers or provide materials. Seeing as Tomra gets paid based upon the number of containers they pick up its hard to understand why and how they operate in the manner that they do.

Finally, the only part of H.158 that I feel could be modified is the timeframe or at a very minimum would be the the timeframe to add just water bottles to the deposit law. My store sells more than 30 cases a week of water which is far more than any other beverage product and totals over 700 containers a week of which a significant amount never get recycled. There is a bus stop just across the street from my business where the ground is constantly littered with water and other containers. I watch people go through and pick up the returnable containers but the non-returnable ones always get left behind.

While I honestly can't say that my opinions are 100% objective I still hope you will consider them while contemplating legislation for the expansion of the redemption law seeing as it makes a lot of sense for the environment of Vermont and also the people of Vermont. If you have any questions or comments I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

JR Bullock
Olivia's Market
Rutland, VT