



February 15, 2023

House Committee on Environment and Energy  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633

**RE: H.158, An Act Relating to the Beverage Container Redemption System**

Dear Chair Sheldon, Vice Chair Sibilia, and Members of the House Committee on Environment and Energy:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written answers to two questions posed during my virtual testimony this morning, on February 15, 2023.

As I stated during today's hearing, I would like to follow up on two questions Vice Chair Sibilia raised that required more research or deliberation:

1. Does Maine have single-stream recycling?
  - a. Many Mainers have access to single-stream recycling, but not the entire state. About half of Maine's population has single-stream and half does not. Towns who use [eco-maine](#) do. Other towns have access to single-stream recycling through Casella's "[Zero-Sort](#)" facilities. Maine is in the process of rulemaking to implement its new [Extended Producer Responsibility Program](#), which will ultimately allow for a comprehensive mapping of the state's recycling access.
2. If the State of Vermont had one million dollars at its disposal to improve Vermont's container redemption system, how should the money be spent?
  - a. One of the major advantages of the Bottle Bill is that it creates a privately funded collection infrastructure for beverage containers. However, if the State had funding to enhance the container redemption system, the best allocation of resources would be to invest in better sorting technology.
  - b. Because redemption centers are experiencing challenges, Conservation Law Foundation recommends that the state provide grants to redemption centers to invest in automated technology:



- i. With a million dollars to spend, Vermont could provide grants to redemption centers to incentivize their investment in bulk Reverse Vending Technology. These machines allow customers to redeem up to 100+ aluminum cans and plastic bottles at once and therefore reduce the time and labor required by redemption centers when sorting—which is significant because we have heard from redemption centers that the labor and costs associated with sorting is overwhelming these centers and threatening their viability.
- ii. Reverse Vending Technology decreases the burdens on redemption centers and allows them to allocate their labor more productively. The Morrisville Beverage Redemption center estimates they saved thousands of dollars in 2022 due to investing in the TOMRA R1 sorting machine.<sup>1</sup>
- iii. We are also hearing repeatedly from redemption owners that they are concerned about space; this technology reduces the amount of square footage needed for sorting and bagging. The machines compact all containers and provide an accurate count. Helping redemption centers invest in cutting-edge technology will help these centers thrive, while improving recycling rates, reducing the amount of materials going to landfills, and improving public health and our environment.

Thank you again for your time and thought-provoking questions today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nora Bosworth".

Nora Bosworth  
Staff Attorney, Zero Waste Project  
Conservation Law Foundation

---

<sup>1</sup> Ethan Hayes, [Testimony](#) in Support of H. 158, Feb. 15, 2023.