



Northeast Region

VT. Bottle Bill Testimony H.158

Hello, I'm Lew Dubuque and I am the Vice President for the Northeast for the National Waste & Recycling Association. NWRA represents the private sector waste, recycling industry. Our companies operate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. NWRA represents approximately 70 percent of the private sector waste and recycling market. Our members are committed to supporting the development of economically sustainable and environmentally friendly recycling.

The subject bill that I am testifying on today would expand the Vermont's "Bottle Bill" Law and increase the list of accepted containers. Bottle Bill expansions present an economic and disruptive burden to both recycling markets and local taxpayers. This bill has the potential to remove up to 50 percent of plastics and aluminum from recycling streams. This reduction in these valuable commodities increases curbside recycling costs for customers and municipalities. It will also threaten curbside service and private recycling facilities, forcing them to cut jobs or shut down due to loss of revenue.

An expanded bottle bill will harm recycling due to the fact that the containers targeted for the expansion are currently being managed effectively in local recycling programs. They are key items in the recycling bin that have a positive commodity value. The value of those containers help underwrite the cost of delivering everyone's recycling services. Without these valuable recyclable containers in the general recyclables stream, the cost to municipalities, and ultimately Vermont resident taxpayers, to continue their recycling programs will assuredly go up. The state of Vermont is already a recognized leader in recycling, and this is due mainly to curbside service. Expanding the bottle bill will only hurt that.

NWRA released a [study](#) that evaluates the impact of bottle bills on materials recovery facility (MRF) costs and revenues and those impacts on municipalities. The study found that although deposits do lead to substantially greater recovery overall, they also lead to higher costs and lower revenues at the material recovery facilities (MRF) as high-value materials move to the deposit system and out of the MRF. The research estimates that municipalities will see an increase of approximately \$2.50 to \$5.00 per household per year in MRF costs, depending on the deposit scenario.



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Recycling programs have weathered tough commodity markets for the last several years. That cycle has now passed and markets are returning -- driving both demand and value for recyclable commodities. This is great news for all involved in recycling, from the resident using curbside recycling, to the municipalities charged with managing recyclables, to industry ensuring that these recyclables make it to end markets for reuse. It is great news too for the environment as recycling reduces the amount of raw materials we take from the planet and prevents significant emissions helping to reduce impacts of climate change.

I would like to thank you for your time today.