

Letter in Support of The National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2003

November 6, 2003

Dear Senator:

The 15 national organizations and 21 state and local organizations and businesses listed below are writing to urge you to co-sponsor the National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2003 that will be introduced within the next week by Sen. Jim Jeffords. This legislation will increase recycling, reduce litter, save energy, create jobs, decrease the generation of waste, and supply raw material to manufacturers.

For over thirty years, bottle bills have been extremely effective at achieving economic, social and environmental goals. The 10 states with deposit laws recycle more containers than all the other 40 states together. But bottle bills have also been unpopular with the regulated parties. The National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act presents an opportunity to provide a new approach that addresses concerns of the industry stakeholders without compromising the public interest.

A recent study by "Businesses and Environments Allied for Recycling" (BEAR) shows that over 114 billion beverage containers are wasted each year. The aluminum can recycling rate for 2002 dipped below 50% for the second time in 16 years. Plastic bottle waste has doubled in the past decade. While the PET plastic soda bottle recovery rate in deposit states is above 70%, non-deposit states recycle less than 25%.

The National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act sets a performance standard which industry must meet and allows industry the freedom to design the most efficient deposit-return program to reach the standard. By providing beverage companies the flexibility to structure and operate their own container recovery programs, this legislation simply extends the beverage company's 'supply chain' to include the management of empty containers after consumption. This approach is appealing because it reduces the administrative burden on government and takes full advantage of the business skills of industry.

Recycling is an easy way to lessen our dependence on foreign oil, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve natural resources. An 80 percent recovery rate would save 250 million additional barrels of crude oil equivalent (bcoe) over a ten-year period, or enough to meet the total energy needs of 1.4 million households each year.

Please join with Senator Jeffords in holding the beverage industry responsible for increasing bottle and can recycling by challenging the industry to create cost-effective solutions to the growing problem of beverage container waste by co-sponsoring the National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2003.

Sincerely,

Organizations in Support of The National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2003

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