CRI supports H3528:
An Act promoting the proper disposal of miniatures
June 2, 2017

The Container Recycling Institute supports H3528 (Rep. Hunt, R-Sandwich), which would add miniature bottles of 100 milliliters or less (known as “nips”) to the Commonwealth’s beverage container deposit law, or “bottle bill.” Nips are currently exempt from the 5¢ deposit.

A 2015 CRI review of litter-related literature found that across the United States, beverage containers and associated packaging (including caps, lids, rings, and labels) comprise 14-22% of litter by piece count.1 Nip sales have been rising steadily since the reviewed litter studies were conducted, so it stands to reason that nip-associated litter has also risen, especially since the design of nips—in contrast to larger bottles of spirits—encourages on-the-go immediate consumption.

While we are unaware of empirical data on the precise prevalence of nips in the litter stream, ample anecdotal evidence suggests that these tiny bottles are increasingly being recognized as a litter problem:

• According to the Beverage Marketing Corporation, U.S. sales of nips have almost tripled in the last decade: growing from 196 million units in 2005 to 554 million in 2015.2
• In response to increasing litter, the City of Boston restricted the sale of nips in at least 16 liquor stores in the City in 2015.3
• Wareham selectmen attempted to ban the sale of nips in the town in 2015, due to the annoyance town residents had expressed at the growing nips litter problem.4
• Maine state liquor stores have seen nips sales rise by 40% in 5 years5, along with nips litter increases, prompting both houses of the Maine legislature to approve a 5¢ deposit on nips in the state, with veto-proof majorities.6
• In Connecticut, SB 995, the “Marine Debris” bill, would put a deposit on nips and bottle caps.7

Rising nips sales, and associated nips litter, is a growing problem in Massachusetts and throughout New England, threatening scenic assets, posing a danger to wildlife, and costing money to clean up. The 5¢ deposit is a proven method of reducing litter and increasing recycling, and CRI supports adding nips to the list of beverage containers covered by the Massachusetts bottle bill. Even if doing so will not directly thwart the actions of those who throw nips out the car window, the 5¢ deposit will provide an effective financial incentive for others to collect and redeem littered nips for recycling.

About the Container Recycling Institute (CRI): CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of used beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging. Its mission is to make North America a global model for the collection and quality recycling of packaging materials.

2 “Beverage Packaging in the U.S.” Beverage Marketing Corporation (BMC), September 2016 (and previous years).