



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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Testimony submitted by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
To the Joint Committee on Telecommunications and Utilities
In Support of H.2943 and S.1588
An Act updating the bottle bill

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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) strongly supports H.2943 and S.1588, sponsored by Rep. Jonathan Hecht and Sen. Cynthia Stone Creem respectively, updating the original "Bottle Bill" by expanding the deposit on glass, plastic and metal containers to include non-alcoholic, non-carbonated drinks, such as water, juice, iced tea and sports drinks, which represent one third of the over 3 billion beverage containers sold annually in Massachusetts.

Following are some reasons to give these bills a favorable report:

1. **Deposits work to reduce litter and increase recycling.** – 70% of beverage containers currently covered by the bottle bill are redeemed and 10% are recycled. Only 23% of non-deposit containers are recycled.
2. **Municipalities will save money.** – Removing these containers from trash collection, disposal and storm drain cleaning will save cities and towns an estimated \$6 million annually.
3. **Pollution of air and water will decrease.** – Incineration of plastic bottles introduces dioxins and other synthetic chemicals into our environment.
4. **The update will create jobs.** - Every state that has updated its deposit system has gained jobs, many in the recycling sector, which produces important and sustainable raw materials needed in manufacturing.
5. **Fossil fuel resources will be conserved.** – Plastic containers are made of PET (polyethylene terephthalate), which is 99% petroleum. Products are being developed using recycled water bottles, including textiles such as Polartec,[®] produced in Lawrence, MA.
6. **There is widespread support for passage.** – Over 350 small businesses, over 208 Massachusetts cities and towns, over 90 local and statewide environment, sustainability and public policy advocacy organizations and over 70% of individual voters support expanding the deposit system.

None of these facts are new. All have been reported over many legislative sessions. The multiple environmental and fiscal benefits incorporated in this legislation have maintained well-documented and broad-based support for over a decade, in spite of well-financed and aggressive efforts by its opponents. And in spite of this support, it has failed to come before the legislature for a vote.

Therefore, in the interest of the majority of Massachusetts citizens and municipalities who strongly favor the expansion of the current deposit system, LWVMA is focused on pursuing an initiative petition to place the "Updated Bottle Bill" on the 2014 ballot.

However, we continue to prefer that the "Updated Bottle Bill" become law through the traditional legislative process, and we optimistically look forward to this Committee issuing a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.