



Legislation Summary:

An Act improving recycling in the Commonwealth

Initial bill numbers: [H1744](#), [H2686](#), [S1865](#) (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsors: Rep. Mark Cusack, Rep. Colleen Garry, Sen. Michael Moore

These bills would amend various provisions of the General Laws to repeal the 5-cent bottle deposit/refund law and instead institute a 1-cent recycling fee on all containers of carbonated, noncarbonated-alcoholic and noncarbonated-nonalcoholic drinks, except milk and dairy derived products, infant formula or medical food, to be paid by distributors/wholesalers, either quarterly or annually. They provide that fees collected and abandoned deposit amounts be used for litter prevention and removal, municipal recycling collection programs and programs to increase recycling at public facilities and urban parks district reservations; assess manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and dealers a 1½ % interest fee on late recycling fee payments; and subject manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and dealers to a \$1,000 civil fine for each violation of this act. The 1-cent fee expires in three years.

The bottle deposit system shifts some of the burden of managing litter and waste from municipalities to the manufacturers whose products generate that waste, and repealing it would increase the burden on municipalities. It also provides a source of funds for civic organizations which collect containers and redeem them for the deposits.

The bottle deposit system remains an extremely effective way to reduce litter. Of course many people recycle beverage containers when they finish their drink at home. The problem is with beverages consumed away from home. With no deposit on bottles containing water, tea and sports drinks, consumers tend to discard them—often in overflowing trash containers when no recycling bin is available.

The League opposes these bills.

League position: The League supports:

- Policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes
- Policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes in order to protect public health and air, water and land resources