



*Testimony in opposition to
S.1865, H.2686 and H.1744 An Act improving recycling in the commonwealth
Submitted to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts opposes bills S.1865, H.2686 and H.1744, which, despite their title of An Act improving recycling in the Commonwealth, would, in fact, eliminate the bottle deposit system, one of the most effective programs to reduce litter and encourage recycling.

These bills would replace the current nickel deposit on carbonated beverage containers with a one-cent “recycling fee” on all containers, with the revenue supposedly going to fund recycling efforts. That fee would expire in three years, taking that revenue stream with it.

The League feels the current bottle deposit system should be expanded, not eliminated. That’s why our members worked so hard on the ballot initiative to extend the deposit to non-carbonated beverages. We certainly oppose any effort to weaken the system.

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. Look around—you seldom see soda cans, which have a deposit, littering the streets, playgrounds and beaches. But plastic water bottles are all over the place.

The League urges the joint committee to reject these bills repealing the bottle deposit system, and to instead seek ways to expand and improve that system. That would truly be a way to improve recycling in the Commonwealth.