



News from **Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle**

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VAINIERI HUTTLE INTRODUCES ‘SMART CONTAINER ACT’ TO MITIGATE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Measure Would Encourage Return, Reuse of Discarded Beverage Bottles

(TRENTON) –New Jersey would become the 12th state in the country to require deposits on beverage containers under legislation Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle recently introduced to establish an incentive-based recycling program to reduce litter.

Her bill (A-4493) is entitled the Smart Container Act and would impose a minimum 10 cent deposit on beverage bottles and cans. The bill would apply to containers for juice, sports drinks, bottled waters, soda, wine and beer.

“If New Jersey wants to get serious about reducing litter and protecting the environment, then it will empower all citizens to play a part in recycling the billions of bottles and cans that enter our waste stream each year,” said Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen). “For the sake of our communities and future generations, we need to change our ways.”

Under the Smart Container Act, the distributor would pay the initial deposit on each full beverage container to be sold in New Jersey to the State Treasurer on a quarterly basis. The retailer would collect the deposit from the consumer when the beverage is sold and reimburse the distributor

The legislation would establish a container deposit program that would require all beverage bottles and cans sold or offered for sale in the state to have a refund value and a “smart container bar code” to identify the container as sold in New Jersey. The bill also would require a 10-cent deposit on all plastic and glass bottles and aluminum cans under 24 ounces and a 20-cent deposit on non-refillable beverage containers over 24 ounces.

The state Department of Environmental Protection would be authorized to license and regulate the establishment of privately owned and operated beverage container redemption centers, where consumers and retailers could bring empty containers for refunds.

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“We should reuse and recycle beverage bottles and cans whenever we can to conserve energy and natural resources,” said Vainieri Huttle. “We cannot afford to treat beverage containers as one-use, throw-away items. These plastic, glass and aluminum containers account for nearly 40 percent of all trash. They are an eyesore and a threat to the environment and public health.”

Vainieri Huttle said the legislation has economic dividends in addition to its environmental benefits because it would create new jobs and foster more business for companies that process and recycle glass, aluminum and plastic containers.

The bill would mandate that 75 percent of the unclaimed deposits be kept by the state, while the other 25 percent would be redistributed proportionately to retailers and redemption centers for handling costs based on the number of containers redeemed.

The state’s unclaimed deposits would be placed in a fund to defray the costs of administering the program, to support public education, to cover enforcement costs and to finance grants for environmental projects such as land preservation, litter cleanup and public-area beautification.

“When it comes to protecting the environment, consumers invariably want to be part of the solution and not the problem,” said Vainieri Huttle. “This is a proven strategy that has worked in other states to crack down on litter, foster new jobs, and promote better use of natural resources and energy.”

According to the Container Recycling Institute, Oregon passed the first bottle bill in the U.S. to require refundable deposits on all beer and soft drink containers in 1971. Currently, there are 11 states including: Oregon, Vermont, Michigan, Maine Iowa, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Delaware, New York, California and Hawaii and many countries like Canada that have beverage container laws.

The Vainieri Huttle bill mirrors the Michigan plan which has been recognized as one of the country’s most successful container deposit laws, although it applies only to glass bottles and aluminum cans. According to Container Recycling Institute, Michigan’s 10-cent bottle deposit law resulted in a 97 percent recycling rate of beverage containers.