

Testimony of Warren Boyle -- Owner of Fitzgerald's Foods in Simsbury

In Opposition to Raised Bill No. 1289 and Expanding the Bottle Bill

Before the Environment Committee, February 28, 2007

We recycled 174,030 tons of cardboard as reported to the CT DEP for 2006. This number does not include cardboard sent outside of CT and not reported to CT DEP. This number would be substantial. With the out of state chains doing business in CT and America's largest wholesaler located in VT I own a small independent store and even I purchased a cardboard baler in 1989 and have been recycling all of my cardboard ever since. For as long as I can remember, we have taken all the fat, scraps, and trimmings in our meat departments and turned them over to a rendering company where they get processed into other usable products. At one time, we received income from this transaction. For years now we must pay the rendering company to come and pick up our material. It would probably be cheaper to just add the meat material into our main waste stream. I do not know of any supermarket company not recycling the meat products because it is the right thing to do.

Many of us have separate waste barrels in our office areas to collect recyclable papers, and most of our break rooms have a place for beverage containers to be recycled. I am proud of the roll our industry has taken in reducing waste by recycling.

Now, I'd like to walk you through the life cycle of a soda can. What happens from start to finish of the returnable beverage can?

This Coke can will get delivered to my store. The Coke co. has to detail the deposit amount of each product on the bill which we verify, and they must also keep track of the deposit on everyone of his brothers, sisters, nephews, etc. Not an easy task.

Now, I have to except this product and once it is checked in, I have to record the product and the deposit separately, and track the DEPOSITS PAID.

My Coke can goes on the shelf and someone purchases it. At the register, I must record the sale of the can and the deposit paid, and keep track of it.

Now my Coke can goes home into the fridge. Hopefully it is consumed at home, for our sake let's say it does. Someone drinks the Coke and we hope that someone rinses the can out. (From experience we are pretty sure this is not going to happen.) And the can is then put in the garage, porch, basement or some other out of the way place.

Now, when my Coke can has enough friends hanging around with him someone in the family brings he and all his friends to our store to pop into the reverse vending machine. These cans will have soda syrup running out of them, quite possibly insects or once in a great while, rodents. This is all pushed through the trap door on the machine and a slip is produced to show the customer the total we owe him or her for the bottles. He goes to

the registers and we give her the amount of bottle deposits we owe her and we must keep track of it.

Let me leave my Coke can in the machine for a minute and talk about the machine. All that syrup has to be cleaned, most times twice a day, and on Saturday the machine is cleaned completely inside and out. Cleaning costs are around \$75.00 a month. The machine has to be emptied and the contents, in it's leaky smelly mess, stored somewhere in our store. This is probably about \$35 to \$40 a month. Every night we have to inventory the bottles processed in the machine and count the icky sticky bottles the machine would not accept, to balance the bottles received against the money paid out, that tracking thing. Bottle returns are a favorite way for employees to get a little extra cash for an evening out, so, it must be balance every night. This costs about \$120.00 a month. This is about \$230.00 in salaries, add taxes and benefits your close to \$300.00. Now the machine rental is \$250.00, supplies for the machine run about \$15.00 and sales tax on the machine rental and supplies is \$15.90. Now we do pay a property tax on the machine probably about \$10.00 a month. Last is the monthly pest control to keep the critters that invariably get into the machine under control. The part for the bottle area is around \$5 Or \$6. This brings the cost for the temporary home of my little Coke can to \$595.90 per month or \$7,150.80 a year.

Let's pick up our little Coke can sitting in the machine. He is transported to our basement where he awaits a pickup by Tomra. A large 18 wheel truck is on the road everyday stopping at grocery stores, convince stores, pizza parlors etc. The product is then brought to a central location for separation and processing.

Now how about if that little Coke can was purchased in my store, brought home, consumed, rinsed, put in the weekly recycle bin, and put at the curb on trash day. What a concept. I know curb side recycling is not in every town. The towns it is in it has been a huge success. Perhaps the Bottle deposit doesn't go away, but becomes a bottle recycle fee, to fund recycling programs in towns that do not presently have them, funding for the parks department for the amount of trash and recycle receptacles and maintenance, and possibly to finance and encourage businesses to process and find manufacturing uses in CT for this material.