

Broome County Environmental Management Council

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May 1, 2007

Hon. Eliot Spitzer
New York State Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Call for Compromise to Bigger Better Bottle Bill

Dear Governor Spitzer:

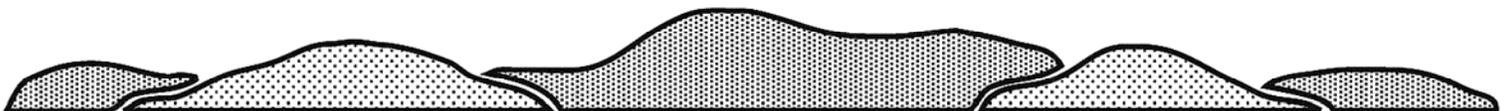
The Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC), Broome County government's citizen advisory body on local environmental matters, writes to ask our New York State Representatives to consider a compromise to the failed Bigger Better Bottle Bill.

Currently in New York State, there are two competing strategies on how to deal with recyclable beverage containers. One strategy is the current system (the Returnable Container Law) with its returnable deposit on some beverage containers. As you know, supporters of the current system want to expand the law to cover water bottles and non-carbonated beverage containers (Bigger Better Bottle Bill - BBBB). The other strategy suggests abandoning the deposit system, while strengthening and expanding our community recycling programs to collect and process all beverage containers. One variation proposes a special tax on all beverage containers with proceeds destined to help pay for community recycling programs charged with the responsibility of recovering them.

The Returnable Container Law has been very successful, not only in its recovery rates that far exceed any recycling program yet devised, but also in its ability to reduce litter. This success is the result of incentivizing returns so that many people bring their cans and bottles back after use and for those who do not, the money is "left on the table" for an army of volunteers to collect, using the proceeds to help fund a variety of good causes from music boosters to sports clubs.

The Beverage Container Law's main shortcoming is that it requires every beverage retailer to create, in effect, a mini recycling program. Such a system is more costly and far less efficient than recycling systems paired with regular waste collection. Some are concerned about significant increase in volume of the returns that the proposed bottle bill expansion (BBBB) represents and worry about the current system's ability to accommodate it. Others worry about the loss of revenue to existing community recycling programs when a significant volume of high grade material is drawn off.

The Broome County EMC respectfully suggests that those on both sides seek common ground. This may expand occasions for retailers and redemption centers to explore mutually beneficial business opportunities. While certainly very effective in its ability to recover material, perhaps the Beverage Container Law's greater strength is in its ability to reduce litter. Looked at in this



fashion, the size and typical use of the container is far more significant than the type of beverage it contains.

A single-serving container is far more likely to be carried around outside the home and carelessly disposed of than would a two-liter bottle, for example. A casual observing of the growing amount of litter suggests that single-serving, non-carbonated beverage containers are much more prevalent. A larger container is more likely to stay within the home and be deposited with other containers collected through a community recycling program. At the same time, these same bottles are more bulky and harder to store, both at home and at the retail store.

The EMC suggests that an expansion of the bottle deposit to all water and non-carbonated beverage containers be accompanied by the removal of all 1.75-liter (59 oz) containers and larger from the deposit requirement. This could reduce the negative impact on beverage retailers and perhaps encourage more bulk buying (reduced packaging) as well.

We hope that you will entertain this suggestion in your discussions in Albany this year. Thank you for time and consideration regarding this matter.

Respectfully,

(Electronically signed)

André LaClair
Broome County EMC Chair

cc: Hon. C. Crouch, NYS Assemblyman, 107th District
Hon. G. Finch, NYS Assemblyman, 123rd District
Hon. D. Lupardo, NYS Assemblywoman, 126th District
Hon. S. Silver, NYS Assemblyman, 64th District
Hon. R. Sweeney, NYS Assemblyman, 11th District
Hon. J. Bruno, NYS Senator, 43rd District
Hon. K. LaValle, NYS Senator, 1st District
Hon. T. Libous, NYS Senator, 52nd District
Hon. C. Marcellino, NYS Senator, 5th District
Hon. B. Fiala, Broome County Executive
R. Petkash, BC Planning Commissioner
R. Keibel, BC EMC Legislative Rep
T. Cleary, BC EMC Legislative Rep
A. Lubzanski, EMC RWMC Chair
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