



January 20, 2005

Hon. Senator R. O'Leary
Room 416-A, State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator O'Leary,

The Mashpee Environmental Coalition's (MEC) Board of Directors, by unanimous vote on January 12, 2005, opposes any weakening of the existing container redemption legislation. . We view the existing system as a necessary tool in the resolution of litter, environmental damage and solid waste management problems.

Roadway travel through various states provides a visual justification for a strong redemption policy. It is obvious whether the state has a redemption policy or not by viewing the roadside.

Based upon historical realities, the evidence supporting redemption legislation is overwhelming. There are still a few remaining older residents who recall a time when soft drinks were a nickel with a two cent deposit. As youngsters, we were fortunate if we could find one bottle per week to supplement our allowances. The two cents represented 40% of the product cost, making the deposit more significant than the pricing we see today. The plethora of roadside discards appearing when that pricing system was terminated due to the cessation of refilling practices was a disgusting prelude and a demonstration of the need for an effective redemption policy. Unfortunately, the lack of inclusion for many container types coupled with the low deposit amount is a detractor from a basically sound system

The inherent fairness of avoiding regressive State resident costs should be a major consideration in any proposed program. . A uniform cost imposed by government against any level in the supply chain will not be absorbed at that level but will be passed on to the ultimate consumer. A shift of consumer costs from optional (return your container and avoid a fee) to mandatory (included in the selling price) penalizes the lower income family that is more likely to engage in redemption activities than the more financially comfortable.

It should be noted that the current system provides jobs at redemption centers and has financial offshoots that benefit differing youth organizations. There can be no guarantee that any new fees imposed for a dedicated environmental fund will not be sidetracked by future legislative actions.

The MEC Board of Directors respectfully suggests, the senator support an expansion of the redemption policy to include additional container types and a more significant deposit amount.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Baker".

For the Board of Directors

Edward A Baker

President

Cc: Representative M. Patrick
Representative J. Perry