

UPDATED BOTTLE BILL GATHERS MOMENTUM

Sen. Eldridge Joins Half of Senate as a Co-sponsor of Recycling Legislation

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In a sign that the Updated Bottle Bill has gained greater momentum for passage than ever this session, 95 legislators have signed on as a co-sponsor of the Updated Bottle Bill, including half of the Massachusetts State Senate.

“More than ever, legislators realize that the time to act and finally pass the Updated Bottle Bill is now,” said State Senator Jamie Eldridge, a strong supporter and co-sponsor of the bill.

“Updating the Bottle Bill is a common sense law that would help increase recycling and reduce litter in our parks, along our roads and in our streams. Passing this bill has been one of my top environmental priorities and it is encouraging to see that the majority of legislators are rallying together to express their strong support for this important piece of recycling legislation.”

“The fact that we have twenty State Senators co-sponsoring this bill underscores the message from the Senate—a body which passed the Updated Bottle Bill in May, 2012—that this bill is right solution for the Commonwealth,” said Senator Cynthia Creem, the Senate’s chief sponsor of the legislation.

“I’m heartened that so many of my colleagues have joined me this session in support of an Updated Bottle Bill, and I’m optimistic that we’ll pass this bill soon and protect our environment from the scourge of plastic that is permeating our environment,” said Representative Tom Conroy (D-Wayland), a cosponsor who shares a portion of Senator Eldridge’s district.

Adding to the bill’s surge of momentum, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rick Sullivan recently proposed an increase in the bottle bill handling fee. This handling fee is what the bottling industry pays at redemption centers, grocery stores and other businesses for collecting and transporting bottles and cans for recycling. For years, bottle redemption centers, small, family-owned businesses that are a key part of making the bottle bill work, have been asking for an increase in this fee, which has stood at 2.25 cents for over 20 years. Raising the handling fee establishes a greater financial incentive for redemption centers and provides more places for consumers to turn in their bottles and collect the deposit fees.

Mass Audubon Director of Advocacy Jack Clarke echoed Pruitt’s remarks: “We hope that EEA’s proposal, a welcome and necessary one, and the tremendous support from this year’s legislature will give even more momentum to our coalition’s effort to pass an update to the Bottle Bill in the legislature. Containers without the 5-cent deposit, like water, sports drinks, vitamin beverages and iced teas are becoming more popular, and creating more litter in our ball fields, parks and beaches. Updating the bottle bill, which would get that 5-cent deposit on these everyday beverages, would reduce litter, increase recycling and save cities and towns money in litter pick up and disposal costs,” Clarke added.

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