

Letter: NY's bottle bill due for an update

- December 8, 2021

Two years ago, New York State implemented a plastic bag ban. As of January 1, 2022, the state will start the Expanded Polystyrene Foam Food Container and Polystyrene Loose Fill Packaging Ban. Both of these started as additions to the Governor's Executive Budget, partially as the items were not recyclable through municipal recycling programs and they contributed greatly to roadside litter.

Imagine how much more litter there would be without the New York State Returnable Container Act (the "Bottle Bill"). Since its inception in 1982, studies by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have shown that the Bottle Bill has reduced roadside litter by 70% and helped to recycle 5.5 billion plastic, glass and aluminum containers at no cost to local governments.

A coalition of groups, led by the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), has called on Governor Hochul to include a "Bigger, Better Bottle Bill" as part of her 2022-23 Executive Budget. The Bottle Bill has not changed much since passage in 1982 and the NYPIRG proposal would add deposits to more beverage types including non-carbonated drinks like sports drinks and teas. It also calls for an inflation-adjusted raise in the deposit to 10¢. As we've seen in Oregon, raising the deposit raises the return rate. After they raised their deposit in 2017, the redemption rate rose from 62% in 2016 to 89% in 2020.

I call on Assemblyman Stephen Hawley and State Senator Edward Rath to support this effort which will decrease costs for our communities.

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