

Urging The New York State Legislature To Update New York's Bottle Bill

The Environmental Committee (Chairman Shapiro and Legislators Bartels, Distel, R.A. Parete, Rodriguez, Fabiano and McAfee) and Legislators Berardi, Bischoff, Cahill, Dart, Donaldson, Gregorius, Kraft, Liepmann, Lomita, Loughran, R.S. Parete, Provenzano, Sheeley, Stoeckeler, Terpening and Zimet offer the following:

WHEREAS, Ulster County acknowledges its responsibility to keep our communities clean and healthy, and

WHEREAS, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the Bottle Bill, New York's most effective recycling and litter prevention program, and

WHEREAS, since 1982, more than 90 billion bottles and cans have been returned and recycled in New York, and the volume of litter has been reduced by 30%, because of the 5-cent refundable deposit on beer and soda containers, and

WHEREAS, the Bottle Bill did not include bottled water, iced teas, sports drinks, and other non-carbonated beverages because they were not popular in 1982, but they now make up a quarter of the beverage market, and

WHEREAS, litter surveys conducted in New York by coastal cleanup volunteers found that two-thirds of the bottles and cans polluting New York's rivers and beaches are non-deposit containers, and these containers make up 20% of the total litter volume, and

WHEREAS, 80% of deposit containers are recycled through the Bottle Bill and curbside recycling programs in New York, while only 20% of non-deposit containers are recycled, and

WHEREAS, New York is out of step with many other states, which require beverage companies to return unclaimed bottle deposits to benefit the public, and

WHEREAS, New York's law does not provide for the disposition of any unclaimed deposits, and the beverage industry has retained over \$1.5 billion in unclaimed deposits since 1982, and

WHEREAS, Governor Eliot Spitzer has proposed in the Executive Budget for FY 2007-2008 updating the Bottle Bill to include non-carbonated beverages and requiring beverage companies to transfer unclaimed deposits to the State's Environmental Protection Fund, and

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WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Fund is a dedicated trust fund for New York's environment that supports local recycling programs, parks, waterfront revitalization, open space, farmland preservation, and other programs to protect our land, air, and water, and

WHEREAS, Governor Eliot Spitzer estimates that the unclaimed deposits would generate at least \$100 million annually for the State Environmental Protection Fund, and

WHEREAS, this proposal, known as the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, was passed by the New York State Assembly in 2005 and 2006, and has been endorsed by more than 400 groups, businesses, and local governments across the state.

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature does hereby urge state lawmakers to support cleaner communities, a healthier environment, and increased funding for environmental programs by adopting as legislation, the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor Eliot Spitzer, New York State Comptroller's Office, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari, Assembly Minority Leader James N. Tedisco, New York State Senators John J. Bonacic and William J. Larkin, Jr., New York State Assemblymen Kevin A. Cahill, Clifford W. Crouch, Peter Lopez and Thomas Kirwan, the New York Public Interest Research Group and the New York State Association of Counties,

and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 30 NOES: 1
(NOES: Legislator Gerentine)
(Absent: Legislators Every and Felicello)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE