

Urging New York State Legislature To Increase Recycling And Reduce Municipal Waste Management Costs By Expanding The NYS Returnable Container Act

Referred to: The Energy and Environment Committee (Chairwoman Greene and Legislators Bruno, Criswell, Petit, and Wawro)

Chairman of the Legislature, David B. Donaldson, and Legislators Bruno, Criswell, Greene, Litts, and Wawro offer the following:

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature is engaged in Solid Waste Management and Recycling in Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, empty wine, spirit and beverage glass containers comprise an estimated 90,000 tons of curbside recyclables statewide; and

WHEREAS, such empty glass bottles are not economically viable to recycle as part of curbside recycling programs throughout New York State because the bottles break and become contaminated with paper, plastic, and other non-glass materials at local recycling recovery and sorting facilities; and

WHEREAS, there are no economically viable markets to recycle this contaminated, broken glass material into new glass bottles, and, therefore, the unwanted glass becomes a significant financial burden to New York State's local communities to sort, transport, and properly dispose of, which totals millions of dollars statewide; and

WHEREAS, such broken glass ends up contaminating other recyclable materials such as paper and corrugated cardboard at local material recovery facilities, thereby diminishing the value and marketability of recovered paper products; and

WHEREAS, significant environmental benefits would be realized, including the avoidance of one ton of carbon dioxide for every six tons of container glass recycled if breaking and contaminating this glass could be prevented; and

WHEREAS, if this glass could be recovered for recycling it could be endlessly reprocessed into new glass containers with no loss in quality or purity; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Returnable Container Act, also known as the Bottle Bill, has proven to be the most effective method to reduce litter and increase the recovery and recycling of various glass beverage containers, including glass beer and soda bottles; and

WHEREAS, glass beverage containers with a deposit, such as beer and soda, have an economically viable market because they are source separated; and

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WHEREAS, several other states recognize the environmental and economic benefits of including wine, spirit, and other glass beverage containers in their respective Bottle Bill systems, including California, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine and Vermont; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature believes that expansion of the New York State Returnable Container Act to include wine, liquor and other glass beverage bottles will dramatically increase recycling of these other glass containers, create new recycling jobs for clean, uncontaminated glass and reduce municipal costs to manage these materials as part of the municipal curbside recycling collection programs; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature is committed to the New York State solid waste management hierarchy which emphasizes waste reduction, reuse and recycling first, all of which would be served by expanding the bottle deposit system to include these additional glass containers thereby creating more recycling of these containers and fewer trashed; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature does hereby strongly urge the New York State Legislature to expand the Bottle Bill as outlined above to include wine, liquor and other glass drink containers as a means to reduce litter, increase recycling, create new recycling jobs, as well as reduce the significant financial burden such containers place on local municipalities as part of curbside recycling collection program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Assembly and Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, the Chairs of the Assembly and Senate Environment Committees, and all Ulster County elected Assembly Members and Senators,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 21 NOES: 2
(Noes: Legislators Roberts and Ronk)

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Postponed Committee: Energy and Environment on July 6, 2020 with consent

Passed Committee: Energy and Environment on August 3, 2020

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
NONE

STATE OF NEW YORK

ss:

COUNTY OF ULSTER

I, the undersigned Clerk of the Legislature of the County of Ulster, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is the original resolution adopted by the Ulster County Legislature on the 18th Day of August in the year Two Thousand Twenty, and said resolution shall remain on file in the office of said clerk.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the County of Ulster this 19th Day of August in the year Two Thousand Twenty.

/s/ Victoria A. Fabella
Victoria A. Fabella, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature