



January 22, 2018

The Honorable Holly Merrill Raschein
Chair
House Natural Resources & Public Lands Subcommittee
209 House Office Building
402 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Testimony on Committee Amendment to House Bill 1149

Dear Chair Raschein:

On behalf of the Glass Packaging Institute (GPI), I submit our response to the proposed Committee Amendment to House Bill 1149, which would fundamentally shift metrics and requirements of future recycling contracts for municipalities and cities in Florida.

GPI is the North American trade association for the glass container manufacturers, glass recyclers, and suppliers of materials, equipment and transport to the industry. Our member companies produce the vast majority of U.S. food and beverage glass containers purchased in grocery stores and retail outlets. Collectively, the industry directly employs 18,000 Americans in glass container manufacturing and related recycling throughout the country.

Glass is a 100% recyclable package, and one of the 8 “core” recyclables recognized by the state of Florida, feeding an existing end market in the Southeast. By weight, glass containers on average comprise 25% of a curbside recycling program’s volume. A 2017 survey conducted by the Glass Recycling Coalition found that 96% of residents expect to be able to recycle glass containers. Glass containers are a key part of recycling programs.

GPI supports reducing contamination in recycling bins, but we are concerned about the impact the Committee Amendment may have on the regional glass market. Legislation addressing contamination should not include references or requirements addressing local, available or viable markets.

The Committee Amendment to House Bill 1149, refers to, but does not define, “availability of local markets” for recyclables. This potentially opens the door for a hauler or recycling company to deem glass containers as “contaminated recyclables,” subjecting them to removal from recycling collection programs. End markets for recycled glass are often not measured by proximity, but by the quality of the glass within the program. This language also offers little stability for cities and municipalities that are expected to provide recycling services to their constituents.

GPI recommends a phase-in period for any legislation addressing recycling contracts, so

municipalities may have adequate time to discuss proposed changes with their recycling service providers and constituents. Reference to an effective date upon passage of this act and how it applies to existing contracts should be removed from Section 3, subsection 22(e) of the Committee Amendment language.

Allowing local haulers or recycling companies the ability to declare any one recyclable in their inbound stream as too contaminated may create a potential conflict of interest. Material recovery facility (MRF) operators are paid a processing fee, the purpose of which is to clean up all available recyclable commodities. They make choices in line layouts and where residue is concentrated based upon the scope of the procurement processes initiated by city policies and goals.

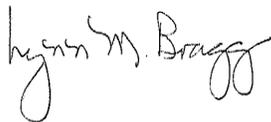
In the case of glass, technology exists today that can take contaminated material which is overwhelmingly organic, and clean it to levels that markets will accept. Cities and the public throughout Florida have shown a willingness to pay for the cleaning of contaminated material, so more material is recycled and kept out of landfills.

In addition, some integrated service providers may have a conflict of interest and see increased revenue by landfilling the material. The entire recycling system would be weakened if one portion of the recycling value chain is permitted to “cherry pick” what to separate based on revenue, rather than solid public planning and policy.

GPI and member companies have worked closely with the recycling supply chain to address challenges related to solid waste and other non-recyclables that are processed at MRFs, and to improve the yield and quality of recycled glass containers available for sale to end markets.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony in response to House Bill 1149’s Committee Amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn M. Bragg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynn M. Bragg
President

Cc: Members, House Natural Resources & Public Lands Subcommittee