

Testimony on Delaware Senate Bill 234

Delaware Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Control

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On behalf of the Glass Packaging Institute (GPI), I am pleased to provide testimony on **Senate Bill 234**, which would revoke the state's current container deposit program (bottle bill) and replace it with a curbside, single stream collection system for the state. The GPI is the North American trade association for the glass container manufacturers, glass recyclers and suppliers to the industry.

Glass recycling and the ability to acquire clean, quality sorted material from existing vehicles, such as container deposit programs, is an essential element of the manufacturing chain at our member's glass plants. The glass companies' preference for this clean material for reuse in their facilities is due in large part to the significant emissions reductions and energy savings realized at the plant level when recycled glass is used.

The clean glass garnered from container deposit programs, referred to in our industry as "cullet", is a highly valued commodity for the glass manufacturers. For every 10% of cullet utilized in the manufacturing process, energy usage is reduced 2%-3%. Additionally, emissions reductions of the most commonly regulated greenhouse gases can be reduced anywhere from 4%-10%, providing a solid environmental benefit. For example, a relative 10% increase in cullet use reduces airborne particulates by 8%, nitrogen oxide by 4%, and sulfur oxides by 10%.

These reductions are realized because the cullet melts at a much lower temperature in the furnaces, which is a primary part of the glass manufacturing process. As glass container facilities may use up to 85% cullet in their furnaces at any given time, the potential for overall emissions reductions can reach 45%.

The emergence of "single stream recycling," or co-mingled collection, which encourages consumers and businesses to throw several different material types of recyclables into a single bin, makes the recycling process difficult at best. Single stream at its core has always focused on cutting costs for municipalities since its inception less than a decade ago.

It is our view that single stream has not fulfilled the essential purpose of recycling, which is to collect material suitable for re-use or recycling into a similar product. Single stream's impact on the resulting commodity materials has

increasingly become an issue of concern not only for the glass industry, but for other commodities that also rely on recycled materials for use in their plants.

A recent article in the February, 2010 issue of *Resource Recycling*, highlighted research that found on average, 40% of glass collected in single stream collection programs ended up in landfills, an additional 20% was so contaminated that it was only usable for lower value, single use markets (aggregate and sandblasting applications, primarily). Since glass containers are a 100% and endlessly recyclable product, single use markets do not tap the potential of our packaging. GPI would also make the point that these single use applications are not line with the consumers' expectations when they take the time to recycle their containers.

As previously mentioned, single stream recycling also has a negative impact on other recyclable materials collected. The same *Resource Recycling* article also explained that plastics processors yielded an 8%-10% loss on average when material was collected single stream, versus a dual stream, or source separated program. Paper pulpers reported on average, a yield loss of eight times the material collected single stream, versus a sorted curbside collection program.

Senate Bill 234 funds the newly proposed collection system with a 4 cent "recycling fee", placed on containers that are currently included in the container deposit program. Since aluminum containers were removed from the deposit program, the fee will be paid at a disproportionate rate when glass containers are purchased. Glass containers would then be forced to become a primary funding vehicle for a collection system that they would see little or no value from.

Citing our above concerns, **we respectfully oppose Senate Bill 234.**

GPI is committed to working with the appropriate state agencies, stakeholders and communities to improve upon the current program. Due to the container deposit law's limited coverage of containers (primarily glass beer bottles and plastic soda bottles), challenges are presented that we typically do not find in other states with container deposit laws. Our member companies with operations in the region have indicated their interest towards increasing purchasing glass for re-use in their manufacturing facilities. They would like to further investigate the possibility of securing this valuable glass directly from the municipalities, providing a direct and valuable outlet for the containers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on **Senate Bill 234.** Please consider the GPI a resource and advocate for responsible recycling.

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