



CENTRAL DISTRIBUTORS, INC.

Maine's Leading Beverage Distributor

**Testimony in Opposition to
LD 1909**

RE: An Act to Modernize Maine's Beverage Container Redemption Law

**Testimony in Support of
LD 1910**

RE: An Act to Amend the Returnable Beverage Container Program

May 15, 2023

Good morning

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources My name is Mike Barriault, I am a resident of Auburn and I am the President and a 4th generation family owner of Central Distributors in Lewiston, a local family operated beverage distributor Our family also operates Aroostook Beverage Co in Presque Isle We employ approximately 160 Maine people, about 20 of which are residents of Aroostook County I also serve as the vice president of the Maine Beer & Wine Distributors association, and the Maine Beer & Wine Commingling Group

We oppose LD 1909 because it will add significant complexity and additional costs to an already extremely expensive system Please consider that Maine already had the highest handling fee in the country, even before it was voted to increase to 6 0 cents (DOUBLE the cost of any other bottle bill in the nation) Please find attached a "Top 10 list" (**Exhibit A**) that itemizes troubling aspects of this bill, and how it would be unfair for other Maine businesses and consumers

We support LD 1910 because it seeks to make Maine's bottle bill less expensive by eliminating manual brand sorting for redemption centers The bill does not intend for the handling fee to be rolled back to 4 5 cents, but it does ask for a discount in consideration of the costs that would be incurred by the participants to manage such a task Please also find attached some "Counterpoints" (**Exhibit B**) that seek to dispel some very unfair comparisons made by NRCM on the bills

Given the complexity of these bills and the late hour, we are also in support of pushing the ideas of these two bills into the DEP resolve – and would be happy to participate in stakeholder groups. I appreciate this opportunity to address the Committee, and would be pleased to walk through the exhibits, participate in work session, or respond to any questions – Thank you, Mike B

Top 10 (or 15) troubling things about 1909 according to the Maine Beer & Wine Distributors Association ...

- 1 Adds an additional 1 cent per container fee for using an RVM, even after an unprecedented/significant handling fee increase to 6 0 cents
- 2 Shifts additional costs including bags/receptacles to be paid for by cooperative, even after an unprecedented/significant handling fee increase to 6 0 cents
- 3 Adds additional CPI adjustments to the handling fee, even though Maine already had highest handling fee in the country before the increase to 6 0 cents
- 4 Unclaimed deposits can NOT be used to offset pick up costs, which will further increase costs and beverage prices
- 5 Unclaimed deposits can NOT be used to offset handling fees above 6 cents, which will further increase costs and beverage prices
- 6 Unclaimed deposits can ONLY be narrowly used (including to pay for bags, expand reusable containers, etc), which will further increase costs and beverage prices
- 7 Requires more frequent pickups that may not be necessary, increasing truck emissions and cost
- 8 Potentially gives CLYNK a waiver to not ensure accuracy based on individual barcode reads, increasing potential fraud
- 9 Appears to require paying for RVM data, when they need to do this now to ensure proper billing and fraud prevention
- 10 Establish rates for "processing" by ABBP (CLYNK), when many large beverage distributors may be able to do this themselves at a more competitive cost than has been suggested
- 11 Adds bag-drop definition, but without longer turnaround time which will help manage costs in some remote areas (2 day turnaround vs 10 in LD 1910 = 7 for up to weekly pickup, and 2-3 for processing)
- 12 Only allows 1 "special" commingle group (vs 2 in LD 1910), which will allow for competition between service providers
- 13 Shifts label registration to cooperative, even though DEP still oversees the program
- 14 Requires a published list of registered containers, and paid bounty for finders of unregistered containers (even though all containers will be picked up because they will no longer have to be manually sorted)
- 15 Removes the beverage industry from the management of its own collective, and fails to recognize the hard work and costs that they endure to successfully operate the bottle-bill in Maine

LD 1909 is EXTREME, EXPENSIVE, and UNFAIR