

Julianne Vogt
Owner

4400 Clinton St.
Buffalo, NY 14224

Buffalo's Best Bottles

1-20-25

Dear NYS Assembly,

We entered into the redemption center business, because our son has some disabilities and this was a job that he could perform. With this said the it has been a struggle to stay afloat over the past 2 years of ownership.

The biggest problem that the redemption centers face id the unclaimed fund, which generates over \$100 million for the state to keep and help the distributes, there was a small percent of this fund that was supposed to go to the redemption centers, but never has, why would the state promote recycling, but never contribute and claim this fund for themselves.

The second and just as big of an issue is the handling fee of 3.5 cents, which has not increased in over 17 years. Minimum wage, inflation, cost of living, have all increased dramatically, with no help or increase to the handling fee, which should be over 8 cents if it followed the same increases as minimum wage. The number of cans needed to support a staff and keep these materials out of the landfill are impossible to maintain with no increase in the handling fees. The industry is desperate for help.

There is only 1 company, Tomra that picks up these recyclables from redemption centers in NY. There is no regulations and they make their own rules and have different rules for different counties and for vendors within those counties, rules are different for each. They will pick up some cans from 1 business and not from another. There are bags and bags full of containers that have no NYS 5 cents, for no other reason than there is no time or care about these non-recyclables. Then system is broken, there are the units that do have the NYS 5 cent stamp, but they don't take them because they aren't on the list of major suppliers, which amounts to thousands of units not being recycled.

The system is broken, there is no concern about recycling when there is an unclaimed fund for the state to keep every year, the company that picks up the recyclables is a monopoly with no regulations and no watchdog to monitor, so this system of keeping the overburdened landfills from receiving these recyclables, desperately needs an overhaul and the support to small business is supposed to be a priority of our governor. But when letters are sent, lobby days and news stories presented to the assembly and nothing has changed in all these years, it is overwhelming and unsustainable that these redemption centers will stay in business, as over 100 stores were closed throughout the state last year.

So, please save our industry and small business in NYS!

Sincerely,

Julianne Vogt

President

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