



2451 Route 20, Cazenovia & 2352 Route 12B, Hamilton

January 28, 2025

Environmental Conservation Budget Hearing Testimony

I own two redemption centers in Madison County. We average 5 million containers per location annually. We are very active in our communities and this year alone we were able to fundraise over \$70,000 for our local non-profits.

And, without a change in the system, I will be forced to close my business.

It has been 16 years without an update to the Bottle Bill, and with that, our pay rate. Minimum Wage has increased 13 times and is now nearly 120% more. Other State regulated expenses (i.e.: Health Insurances and Utilities) have been allowed increases. And Inflation is rocking us with a 47% increase. Outdated pay and doubled expenses are not the only problem. Failure to maintain the scope of the Bottle Bill to keep up with industry trends is a huge factor as well: In 2009, there were 25 Cideries in NY. Today there are 125. There is no deposit on Apple Cider OR Hard Cider. And the first Canned Cocktail wasn't introduced until 2016 (Fun Fact: It was a vodka-lemonade called Disco Lemonade) Just a few years later, High Noon is the #1 selling alcoholic beverage in the US and... No Deposit. Let's not even mention Gatorade.

There has been a Standalone Bill pitched since 2017 to increase the Handling Fee "in accordance with Minimum Wage Increases". (see 2017 A6816/S5366A and subsequents) Each year this bill is ignored as attention is diverted to the larger Bigger Better Bottle Bill, which has had an active bill each session going back to 2011!

We've lost 25% of redemption centers across the state, just in the last 2 years.

The state is throwing away small businesses and jobs... At this point, it feels intentional.

Why should this be a Budget Line Item: \$125 Million collected from the unredeemed deposits. Loss of business taxes, loss of payroll taxes, increased unemployment. Landfills at capacity and operating in the red.

Why HASN'T it been a budget line item? It's time to fix this.

Thank you, Jessica Amidon, Caz Cans

