

# **NEWS** Rensselaer County Legislature

## **Office of the Minority 270-2892**

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May 2, 2008

### **COUNTY DEMOCRATS CALL FOR PASSAGE OF BIGGER BETTER BOTTLE BILL**

**TROY**—Members of the Democratic Minority of the Rensselaer County Legislature are calling on state leaders to pass an expanded Returnable Container Act, commonly referred to as a Bigger Better Bottle Bill. The bill is currently mired in committee in the State Legislature. A resolution urging state lawmakers to adopt the expanded bottle bill will be on the agenda at the upcoming meeting of the Rensselaer County Legislature on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at 5:30PM. Prior to that, the resolution must be approved by the County's Environmental Committee which will be discussing the matter at its meeting on Tuesday, May 6, 2008 at 4:30PM.

The original bottle bill, passed in 1982, has proved to be an effective recycling and litter prevention program. More than 90 billion bottles and containers have been returned and recycled since the law's enactment.

The expanded Bigger Better Bottle Bill would extend the nickel deposit now placed on carbonated beverages to non-carbonated drinks including bottled water, iced tea, and sports drinks—a segment of the beverage market that was much less significant 26 years ago, but that now constitutes more than a quarter of the beverage market. It would also see that a significant portion of the revenues from unredeemed returns would be directed to fund environmental projects statewide. Currently, most deposits go to beverage wholesalers, distributors and bottlers.

Brian Zweig, legislative representative for District 2, noted, "The Bigger Better Bottle Bill is good for the environment and also creates a funding mechanism for important environmental projects at a time when it would be difficult to come up with the money for such projects otherwise."

Legislator Peter Grimm concurred. "Failure to enact this legislation has been a major contributing factor to the growing waste stream. Those of us involved in Earth Day cleanup projects here in Troy couldn't help but notice that discarded water bottles made up a huge part of the trash we collected. Imagine getting a nickel for the millions of containers littering our streets and polluting our waterways. There are so many worthwhile projects in dire need of funding."

"This is common sense legislation that encourages recycling, generates revenue, and produces a cleaner environment. So why hasn't this law been adopted? The answer can likely be found in campaign donations from the bottling industry to GOP causes. It's time for the needs of our communities to take precedence over special interests," reflected Legislator Flora Fasoldt.