

# NEWS RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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### COUNTY DEMOCRATS VICTORIOUS WITH BOTTLE BILL

**TROY--** The fourth try was a winner for the bottle bill, Democrats said Tuesday evening, after the Rensselaer County Legislature's meeting. Since 2003 they have been attempting to pass a resolution supporting the "Bigger, Better Bottle Bill" and at the March monthly meeting they succeeded.

The Rensselaer County Legislature is now on record in support of expanding the bottle bill to include water, iced tea and juice bottles and cans.

Peter Grimm of Troy, a member of the Legislature's Environment Committee, led this year's effort in introducing the resolution, "I am very pleased we were successful in getting bipartisan support and hope this bodes well for the bill at the state level."

Grimm sees the bottle bill as "a crucial step toward community clean-up. These bottles litter our streets and highways. The refund has proven to be an effective incentive for people to return bottles and help keep our communities cleaner."

District 4 Legislator Flora Fasoldt, co-sponsor of the resolution, noted the value Governor Spitzer's bill will have for the state's Environmental Protection Fund. "Local recycling programs, parks, waterfront revitalization, open space, farmland preservation and other programs to protect our land, air and water will benefit from the revenue generated by this expanded bottle bill."

According to Deputy Minority Leader Keith Hammond, a restaurant owner, "Including these bottles will actually make it easier for me and other businesses who now have to sort out the cans and bottles not covered by the current bottle bill." He also noted the importance of expanding the bill to reduce communities' waste stream.

Before the vote, legislators heard from RPI Professor Steve Breyman who heads up Rensselaer County Residents for A Bigger, Better Bottle Bill. He noted that litter surveys found that 2/3 of bottles and cans polluting NY are non-deposit containers. Also, 80% of deposit containers are recycled through the bottle bill and curbside recycling while only 20% of non-deposit containers are recycled.

Support for the bottle bill in the Rensselaer County Legislature passed with a vote of 12-7 that included all six Democratic legislators plus a majority of the Republicans voting in favor of the bill. Those opposing it were Republicans Harrington, Kelleher, Mirch, Salisbury, Stammel, Swartz and Walsh.