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March 16, 2021

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Beyer, Vice Chair Findley and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rick Winterhalter and I'm testifying on SB 847 today on behalf of the Association of Oregon Recyclers (AOR).

The Association of Oregon Recyclers is a nonprofit trade association focused on advancing waste prevention and recycling in Oregon. AOR's diverse membership includes more than 200 businesses, governments, nonprofits and individuals working together on the common goal of achieving a system of sustainable materials management in Oregon.

Enacted in 1971 and implemented in October 1972, Oregon's pioneering Bottle Bill established a system where beverage containers could be redeemed, recycled and returned back to the manufacturing process to become new containers and products. The iconic redemption program has also set the tone for the sustainable materials management ethos we've come to embrace in Oregon.

Responsible for employing roughly 450 individuals and including over 200 co-op participants, Oregon's Bottle Bill program is backed by the beverage and grocery industries and the environmental community, receiving bipartisan support from Oregon lawmakers since its initial enactment 50 years ago. The Bottle Bill program is also a successful statewide system that operates without the use of any state tax dollars or costs to the state.

AOR has been a supporter of Oregon's Bottle Bill since the organization's inception in 1977 and has been involved in the policy-related progression of the state's container redemption program since the outset of the association.

AOR supports Senate Bill 847 and the establishment of the Bottle Bill Expansion, Access and Transparency Task Force, as the association sees this as another opportunity to further strengthen and progress this 50-year-old program.

2007's Senate Bill 707 created the last Bottle Bill Task Force and the recommendations and subsequent legislative activities associated with that effort laid the groundwork for the system's current success, whether that was supporting the establishment of an industry-ran statewide system of redemption centers,

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increasing the refund value of eligible containers or expanding the system to include sports drinks, coffees, teas, juices and other beverages.

Now, systems grow, environments change over time and, even if a system is performing successfully, you always want to make sure that system is adapting to meet the needs of today's consumers and retailers. With the right partners providing the right guidance, improvements are expected that will not only strengthen the efforts associated with that system, but make it much more effective, efficient and equitable for every stakeholder it impacts. The 2021-2022 task force will do just that.

One of AOR's guiding principles when it comes to support of the Bottle Bill is "ensuring the system is always open to the addition of recyclable containers and that all container types are being considered." AOR supports the Bottle Bill Expansion Subcommittee evaluating expansion of the system to include more beverage containers, including those housing wine and liquor, two beverages that were recommended by the 2007-2008 task force but were not included with 2011's HB 3145, which expanded the system in January 2018 to include sports drinks, coffees, teas, juices and other beverages.

Another of AOR's guiding principles is to "ensure convenience and effectiveness" of the system, including:

- The continual progression to make the system as conveniently accessible as possible for consumers statewide, thus encouraging participation and allowing the system to achieve the highest recovery rates possible.
- Continue to make the redemption process as convenient and effective as possible for dealers statewide.

AOR supports the efforts to be undertaken by the Access and Transparency Subcommittee, as it looks to create recommendations that will eliminate barriers to the system and ensure that Oregon's Bottle Bill is transparent and operates even more equitably and efficiently going forward.

The Association of Oregon Recyclers supports Senate Bill 847 and the ongoing effort to progress Oregon's Bottle Bill system. The association looks forward to working with our partners to ensure Oregon's iconic redemption system will be looked at as a leader for many decades to come. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Rick Winterhalter

Association of Oregon Recyclers Bottle Bill Subcommittee

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