



February 15, 2021

The Honorable Senator Lee Beyer, Chair  
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) writes to express our support for HB 5018, the budget for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC). OBRC was formed by the beverage industry in Oregon to help manage Oregon's landmark Bottle Bill, and we, with the OLCC, have been stewards of this program ever since.

Oregon's Bottle Bill, now celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, remains one of the most impactful and celebrated legislative accomplishments in Oregon history. With over two-billion containers redeemed and recycled each year (representing a redemption rate routinely in the 80-90% range), Oregon's first-of-its-kind system in the United States continues to see some of the best outcomes of any system in the nation, and even in the world.

As an industry-operated extended producer responsibility system, our customers and your constituents rely upon the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) to regulate compliance with the Bottle Bill and ensure that Oregonians are seeing strong outcomes. Over the five-decades since the Bottle Bill was adopted, OLCC has been a capable regulator and a good partner in the growth and success of Oregon's redemption system.

We are grateful for OLCC's work fielding customer inquiries, regulating consumer access, tabulating annual output measures, and documenting the success of Oregon's program. The OLCC keeps all participants in the Bottle Bill, including distributors, grocers, and our co-op, transparent and accountable. Specifically, we appreciate Becky Voelkel, OLCC's Bottle Bill Program staff, as well as Hillary Hahn, who has more recently joined the Bottle Bill team at OLCC. We work regularly and collaboratively with these individuals, and with the agency as a whole, in supporting the success of the Bottle Bill. You may recall that last session we supported a fee on our operations to help fund this work.

The past year was particularly challenging for Bottle Bill program staff, given the profound and still-enduring impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, Oregon experienced 32

weeks of return-to-retail suspensions occurring somewhere in Oregon in 2020 (and still counting in 2021). Given the reduced access at retail locations, we worked tremendously hard at OBRC to ensure that our BottleDrop facilities could remain in operation, which required close collaboration with our partners at OLCC, who were very helpful. While some other states temporarily shuttered their redemption programs, Oregon's system proved resilient and strong, thanks in large part to OLCC's dedication and partnership.

Oregon is well-served by its Bottle Bill, and Oregonians are well-served by their Bottle Bill regulators at OLCC. We encourage the Subcommittee to continue to support this critical work as they consider the OLCC budget in HB 5018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Chambers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

Eric Chambers, External Relations Director  
Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative