

Submitter: Astrid Jenkins

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3940

Please do not include the Bottle Bill in HB 3940 A

I am Board President for the Center For Spiritual Living in Eugene, and while I am not giving this testimony on the organizations behalf or in my capacity as Board President I am submitting this testimony because my work here makes this an important subject to me. I have worked hard over the past years shoring up a bright future for our small spiritual community which welcomes everyone no matter who they love, what they look like, where they come from, no matter what disability they may have, no matter what, and especially no matter who wants us to stop whether they work in Salem or DC, because our doors will always be open to everyone.

Now, as part of shoring up that beautifully diverse future, we have worked with the amazing folks at BottleDrop to raise funds for our programs such as keeping a little free food pantry stocked up. It has been a joy to partner with this team to help hungry folks in the Coburg Rd area of Eugene and beyond. But, now there is a proposal that could harm the very people I've come to know and value through a tax on this amazing program. This proposal would harm BottleDrops ability to partner with many groups around the state, and the one I am with is just one of them. Losing funds raised through BottleDrop would reduce the ability of the nonprofit I am associated with to continue offering vital programs such as our food pantry and others for Oregonians. This money can come from elsewhere such as state and local police which are rife with fraud, waste, and abuse of folks around our state.

Most of our members are women in their 60s-80s and they love bringing in their bottles and cans, heck some are so excited that they even bring in the bottles and cans of their friends. One of our members rekindled an 15-year idle friendship when she called her friend and asked if she could pick up her friends bottles and cans to donate to us to help us feed hungry folks. I know that doesn't often mean much in the halls of power. Many would say that it doesn't make sense to base policy decisions on whether they help older women build friendships, but I ask you, is there a better reason? In these troubling times we see so much fighting and hatred, there's often such a visceral nature in our approach to politics. But we can choose to hold fast to our values and we can make choices that help bring people together and build friendships, because at the end of the day the only way we get through the hardest times is with our friends. So, I ask you to join me in saying NO to this off-the-mark proposal and YES to supporting BottleDrop all the way.