

Submitter: Kent Rochester

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3940

I am a proud Oregonian and I'm especially proud of the Bottle Bill and what it's done to keep Oregon cleaner and greener. For more than 50 years, the Bottle Bill has been a model of environmental success, helping to keep bottles and cans out of our roadsides and natural areas while also supporting families and nonprofits across the state. Today, Oregonians recycle more than 2 billion bottles and cans annually, and more than \$200 million in refunds is returned to consumers every year. The Bottle Bill has created a proven, private recycling system that operates without taxpayer funding while delivering nation-leading results.

I saw the benefits firsthand back in 1978 when I picked up litter along our highways, working as part of an ODOT teen litter crew during the summer. Everyday we would pick up litter along Interstate 5 as well as state roads around Douglas County. We saw all kinds of litter, from fast food containers to disposable diapers, but rarely did we see beverage containers. When we did find bottles and cans, we separated them from the rest of the litter so that we could cash them in at the end of the week and add that money to our summer wages.

I realize, along with most Oregonians, that wildfires in our state are a growing problem. As a City Councilor in the City of Oakland, I have witnessed the challenges caused by wildfires. The Archie Creek Fire of 2020 burned the Calapooya Creek Watershed that provides water to the citizens of Oakland. The fire has created much higher water temperatures and we have seen our water chemistry change as well. These are problems we have faced since the fire and will face moving forward as we try to come up with a solution for our water supply. I support finding sustainable funding for wildfire management because it is undeniably important, but there is absolutely no correlation between our Bottle Bill and the causes of wildfire. It doesn't make sense to jeopardize one all-Oregonian environmental solution to solve an unrelated environmental challenge. Taking resources from our Bottle Bill or changing how it operates would break a system Oregonians trust and depend on and threaten a program that benefits every corner of the state.

I urge you to protect the Bottle Bill and all of its far-reaching benefits. Please oppose HB 3940A if it includes any changes to this essential and successful program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kent Rochester