



May 21, 2025

Dear Chair Jama and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

It is with great honor and heartfelt appreciation that I write in support of HCR 8 honoring the extraordinary contributions of Representative Vicki Berger. Following in the footsteps of her father's legacy, her dedication to the ideals and practicalities of Oregon's Bottle Bill has left an indelible mark on the fabric of our state.

Like Vicki, Oregon's Bottle Bill has been a central theme narrating much of my life story. For this reason, I felt an immediate connection to her when we first met nearly 20 years ago.

Growing up on the Oregon coast just a few miles from where Vicki's father, Richard Chambers, first conceived of the Bottle Bill, little did I know my first post-college job would begin in 1993 working for CRinc, a cooperative managing beverage distributors' Bottle Bill responsibilities in the Portland area. Over the ensuing years, I worked my way up to CEO where I had the opportunity to play an instrumental role in founding what is now the statewide Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative. I have served as OBRC's CEO for the past 17 years and as I prepare to transition out of my role with the cooperative, I often reflect on the history of this system and how it has evolved over the years to meet the needs of Oregonians.

Perhaps, the most valuable attribute of Oregon's Bottle Bill is how its aspirational rather than prescriptive nature allowed for one of the most successful public-private partnerships in Oregon's history. Much of that public-private partnership succeeded through the leadership and support of wise policymakers, none more influential than Vicki.

Vicki's steadfast commitment and innovative approach helped evolve the Bottle Bill from its inception in 1971 to the comprehensive system we benefit from today. She has been a steadfast advocate, ensuring that policy adapted to changing times while staying true to its foundational principles.

Her influence was particularly evident during the pivotal legislative efforts in 2007 to include water bottles in the Bottle Bill, an expansion that significantly increased the scope and impact of the program. Additionally, her role in 2011 legislation that formally recognized the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative's BottleDrop redemption center



concept-- complete with its iconic Green and Blue bag program-- was a testament to her foresight and commitment to evolving the system to better serve the community.

Her unwavering dedication and strategic vision were instrumental in crafting solutions that balanced environmental priorities with economic realities. Vicki's passion for sustainable practices and her ability to bring diverse stakeholders together made her a formidable force in the legislative arena. Her work not only preserved the integrity of the Bottle Bill but also enhanced its effectiveness and efficiency, making it a model for other states to follow.

Today, Oregon's Bottle Bill policy is at an inflection point in the hearts and minds of many Oregonians. Unfortunately, it is becoming entangled and conflated with a much larger societal challenge in Portland that has multiple causal factors, but surely, Oregon's Bottle Bill is not one of them. In moments like these, it can be helpful to refocus on the fundamentals so we can find clarity on how to move forward. It is times like these where Vicki's guidance and wisdom are missed among the voices in the conversation.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have collaborated with Vicki and to write in honor of the important work of an Oregon Bottle Bill icon, Representative Vicki Berger.

Sincerely,

John Andersen, CEO

Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative