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State Is Ready To Embrace A 21st Century Bottle Bill

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By **Kim Jeffery**

At a very difficult moment in Connecticut history, Gov. M. Jodi Rell has taken an important step to increase recycling in the state and improve our environment. The governor has proposed a new container recycling law that will expand recycling, provide more container return options for consumers and alleviate burdens on bottlers and retailers.

Nestle Waters North America, a Connecticut-based company that employs more than 500 people at three locations in the state - the largest bottled water company in the U.S. - supports Gov. Rell's vision. All plastic bottle containers are recyclable, but the challenge is finding a way to make sure they are collected so they can be reused.

Gov. Rell's 21st century bottle bill establishes a trust fund using deposits paid on carbonated beverages and bottled water. By re-routing the flow of nickel deposits into this trust, the governor's plan will use the nickels to expand recycling options as well as provide a modest funding stream for curbside recycling in municipalities. By supporting more recycling options, consumers will have more flexibility in where they can recycle. More curbside recycling means more ability to capture the plastic bottles - from shampoo to ketchup and detergent - that aren't covered directly by the bottle bill.

Each year, Americans generate roughly 30 million tons of waste from household containers, and only one in four is recycled. Since it would be impractical to send all these containers back through retail stores, we need a modernized bottle bill that can complement comprehensive recycling programs that capture these other household goods.

Society expects us to be part of the solution for what happens to our packaging after our products have been consumed. At Nestle Waters, we recognize and embrace this responsibility, and have set a 10-year goal to reach a 60 percent plastic beverage recycling rate. The positive impact of achieving this goal is substantial. Achieving this rate nationally is the equivalent of taking 3.9 million cars off the road in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Changing the law in Connecticut will help us all achieve our recycling goals. Connecticut's bottle deposit law needs to evolve. It was enacted 31 years ago when environmental protection goals were more modest.

We can devise a system that increases recycling rates, improves our environment and pays for itself. First, there must be agreement that a bottle-deposit law written solely as a new tax structure ignores the original intent of the legislation: Environmental stewardship. It's all about recycling. Gov. Rell's proposal is a major step in the right direction, and she has our full support.

The Author Is Ceo And President Of Nestle Waters North America, Inc.

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