



Connecticut Recyclers Coalition Fact Sheet on 2008 Recycling Legislation

- **Bottle Bill Expansion** - Effective and costs no state money
- **Single Stream Collection** - unproven and needs to be subsidized.
- **What to do?**
 - Support Bottle Bill expansion!
 - Use State funds for recycling education and enforcement. If ample money is available, fund single stream pilots.

Bottle bill expansion and single stream collection work differently. One can NOT be substituted for the other!!! Single Stream recycling cannot do what the bottle bills are known to do.

Opponents of the bottle bill expansion proposal are portraying single stream recycling as a better way to recycle than an expanded bottle bill. There may be a future for single stream in CT, but at this point, it is unproven and would require state subsidies to happen.

What is single stream collection?

Single Stream recycling is when bottles and cans get mixed in with paper for recycling. It is very appealing for collectors and residents to recycle this way. However, looking at the bigger picture, there can be many problems. The materials have to be separated with more sophisticated equipment, required far greater capital investment. Glass pieces get mixed with paper. It is very difficult to separate single stream recyclables and many paper manufacturers experience problems dealing with these mixes. It costs them thousands of dollars to fix million dollar equipment and sometimes, the material needs to be processed further or is thrown out as trash.

Who is “21st Century Recycling”?

A new coalition of anti bottle bill grocers and bottlers have created a new group called “21st Century Recycling”. This group is made up many of the anti bottle bill players, who are not experts in recycling. This coalition is simplifying the issue and pitting bottle bills against single stream recycling. Single stream recycling may be good for CT, but it is nothing to rush into. The issues are complicated and long term – not sound byte material of one over the other.

Why can't single stream collection be substituted for a better bottle bill?

We are a society on the go. We consume single serve products on the go more than ever. These items rarely find their way back to the curbside recycling bin, single stream or dual stream. Only a bottle deposit law will do better job of keeping these bottles consumed away from home, from becoming litter on our roadsides, in parks and other locations.

Connecticut Recyclers Coalition does not support 21st Century Recycling's efforts to confuse this issue. Recycling is much more complicated than a sound byte. Single stream collection might be able to play a role in increasing CT's recycling rates, but it will never replace the effective work that bottle deposits can do for recycling at no cost to the State.

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A letter on bottle bill and single stream from CRC president, CJ May

Dear Friends and Members of the Connecticut Recyclers Coalition,

This year's bill to expand Connecticut's deposit law for beverage containers has met with an unexpected and extremely well-organized assault. This year's argument against expanding the bottle bill is based in large part upon another contentious subject: single stream. A newly formed group called 21st Century Recycling (<http://www.21stcenturyrecycling.org/>) is portraying single stream as a better solution for low recycling rates than bottle bills. Citizens are being asked to contact their legislators to support single stream and to stop bottle bill expansion.

I am personally disappointed in the tactic being taken. I have endeavored to keep an open mind about single stream despite the very strong feelings expressed by recycling veterans on both sides of the issue. My own hope has been that if single stream were to be technologically and economically proven to provide advantages for towns, environment, processors and not just the haulers, it might serve as a compliment to the existing or expanded bottle bill. Under this scenario single stream might improve curbside collection while an expanded bottle bill improved away-from-home collection. Unfortunately, the 21st Century Recycling Coalition's campaign is crafted to pit one against the other. As such, I see it not as a simple effort to give the new technology a try. Single stream, whether it will bring a brighter or darker future to recycling, is being used as crude weapon against a needed 21st century expansion to a 20th century law which has reduced litter and improved collection rates. Single stream may end up being good for the public. The way in which it is being employed in this campaign, however, does not serve the public good.

If the 21st Century Recycling Coalition had simply worked to encourage the employment of single stream in our state I would have stood in the middle of the disagreements between opponents and proponents. I would have followed the trials to see the results. Seeing that the 21st Century Recycling Coalition has a two-fold agenda, however, I cannot support its actions. 21st Century is working against the expressed wishes of our Coalition with respect to deposit legislation. A recent straw poll of CRC members showed that a strong majority wanted the CRC to support the current deposit law and its proposed expansions.

As such I urge you to contact your legislators, store owners, friends and neighbors. Let them know that the expansion of the bottle bill in our state will do a much better job of keeping bottles and cans consumed away from home from becoming litter on roadside, in parks and other public locations. States with bottle bills have higher collection rates for cans and bottles than states without bottle bills. Single stream may make curbside recycling easier. It does nothing to encourage someone away from home to recycle a bottle, or to pick up a bottle found on the street.

Members of the 21st Century Recycling are not familiar as advocates of single stream so their place in the 21st Century may at first seem unlikely. They are familiar as opponents of the bottle bill and its expansion, however. Their goal is not to improve recycling but to stop our good bottle bill from getting better.

CJ May

President

Connecticut Recyclers Coalition

"The voice of recycling in Connecticut"

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