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STATEMENT OF NY/NJ BAYKEEPER IN SUPPORT OF A2281 (the “Smart Container Act”)

Debbie Mans, Baykeeper & Executive Director

April 4, 2016

NY/NJ Baykeeper supports the “Smart Container Act” (A2281) sponsored by Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-37).

The goal of the bill, to reduce the amount of litter associated with beverage containers, would have a positive impact on local waterways. All too often, discarded containers find their way into local rivers and streams through storm drains and after rain events.

This past February, NY/NJ Baykeeper published the first [report](#) to document the amount of plastic pollution in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. Based on our estimates, **there are 165 million particles of plastic floating around in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary at any given time.**

Other states has demonstrated the success of “bottle bills” in **creating cleaner and healthier communities**. In [New York](#), their “bottle bill”

- has reduced roadside container litter by 70 percent;
- in 2015 helped to recycle 4.6 billion plastic, glass and aluminum beverage containers totaling

- more than 306,000 tons; at no cost to local governments; and
- eliminates 200,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases each year.

States with “bottle bills” have **increased levels of [recycling](#) and decreased costs with landfilling:**

- States with bottle bills have a beverage container recycling rate of around 60%, while non-deposit states only reach about 24%.
- Since the New York “bottle bill” went into [effect](#), redemption rates have been 70-80 percent and beverage container litter has been reduced by 75 percent.

“Bottle bills” can **generate millions of dollars**. In 2011, unclaimed (abandoned) deposits amounted to approximately \$104 million in New York, \$33.5 million in Massachusetts and \$17.8 million in Michigan.

([Sources](#): “Deposit Initiator Deposit and Payment Statistics, 2008-2011,” prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; August 30, 2012 email from Sean Sylver, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and “Bottle Deposit Information,” prepared by the Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Revenue and Tax Analysis.)

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