



For a thriving New England

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January 27, 2022

By Email

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chair, House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Room 35, State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: House Bill No. 7064, An Act Relating to Health and Safety—Plastic Bottle and Container Labeling Act

Dear Chair Bennett:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 7064, an Act Relating to Health and Safety—Plastic Bottle and Container Labeling Act. Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) **supports** this bill.

CLF is a member-supported nonprofit organization working to conserve natural resources, protect public health, and build healthy communities in Rhode Island and throughout New England. Through its Zero Waste Project, CLF aims to improve waste diversion and recycling programs and protect communities and our environment from plastic pollution.

House Bill 7064 would prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverage containers that hold 100 milliliters or less, commonly referred to as “nips.” Discarded nips containers are ubiquitous on streets and beaches and in parks, rivers, and our ocean. Some litter collectors in Massachusetts have reported that empty nips containers comprise more than 30% of what they collect.¹ During its 2020 Source to Sea Cleanup event on the Connecticut River, the Connecticut River Conservancy reported that nips were the third most common item collected, behind aluminum cans and larger

¹ Beth Treffeisen, *Hearing on Nip Bottle Bill Set for Wednesday at Statehouse*, Cape Cod Times, Jan. 20, 2020, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/news/20200120/hearing-on-nip-bottle-bill-set-for-wednesday-at-statehouse>.

plastic bottles.² It is common to hear stories of pickers collecting hundreds of nips containers in an afternoon.³

Even those nips that do not end up in our environment cannot be recycled. According to the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, plastic bottles that are less than 2 inches tall and 2 inches in diameter, which includes most nips, are too small for recycling sorting equipment.⁴ This means that most nips cannot be recycled through our single-stream recycling system, and inevitably end up in the Central Landfill alongside the other 17,000 *tons* of cans and bottles we bury in Rhode Island every year.⁵

Several towns and cities in Massachusetts—including Falmouth, Mashpee, Chelsea, Wareham, and Newton—have banned the sale of nips, either through local ordinance or decision by a licensing commission.⁶ Local officials in Chelsea, one of the earliest cities to ban nips, noted a dramatic decrease in litter—and a drop in alcohol-related ambulance responses—after the ban went into effect.⁷ By following the lead of these communities and passing House Bill 7064, Rhode Island can keep nips out of our environment and out of our landfill.

For these reasons, CLF respectfully urges the passage of House Bill 7064. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

² Connecticut River Conservancy, *Cleanup Chronicle 24th Annual Source to Sea Cleanup*, Sept. 2020, <https://www.ctriver.org/wp-content/uploads/CRC-Cleanup-Chronicle.12-17-20.pdf>.

³ See, e.g., Editorial, *Our View: Time to Put a Deposit on Nip Bottles*, The Salem News, Jan. 14, 2019, https://www.salemnews.com/opinion/editorials/our-view-time-to-put-a-deposit-on-nip-bottles/article_84eb8c77-be1d-5c76-bf45-850f3ff38bf2.html.

⁴ Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, *A-Z List: Plastic Nip Bottles*, <http://atoz.rirrc.org/items/plastic-nip-bottles>.

⁵ *Rhode Island Solid Waste Characterization Study*, 13 (2015), <http://www.rirrc.org/sites/default/files/2017-02/Waste%20Characterization%20Study%202015.pdf>.

⁶ See, e.g., *City of Newton Issues Ban on Nips to Tackle Pollution*, The Heights, Dec. 7, 2021, <https://www.bcheights.com/2021/12/05/no-more-nips-city-of-newton-issues-ban-to-tackle-pollution/>; Madison Czopek, *Nips Ban, Other Articles Approved by Attorney General*, Wareham Week, Sept. 30, 2021, <https://wareham.theweektoday.com/article/nips-ban-other-articles-approved-attorney-general/55033>; Jessica Hill, *Falmouth Town Meeting Passes Ban on Nip Bottles*, Sept. 15, 2020, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/story/news/2020/09/15/falmouth-town-meeting-passes-ban-on-nip-bottles/42639661/>.

⁷ Sarah Betancourt, *'Nip' Ban Having an Impact in Chelsea*, Commonwealth Magazine, Aug. 18, 2019, <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/health/nip-ban-having-an-impact-in-chelsea/>.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Budris".

Kevin Budris
Senior Attorney, CLF Zero Waste Project

cc: HouseEnvironmentandNaturalResources@rilegislature.gov