



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | March 9, 2017

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Capitol Press Conference to Release New Polling on the Iowa Bottle Bill

DES MOINES – Recent polling conducted by J. Ann Selzer, President and Owner of Selzer & Company, reaffirms the overwhelming popularity of Iowa’s deposit law on cans and bottles containing carbonated and alcoholic beverages, commonly known as the bottle bill. “The bottle bill is popular, and most Iowa voters do not want to see it repealed. If anything, they are open to the idea of including more types of beverage containers under the law – requiring a deposit for water and sports drink bottles and cans which would then be eligible for redemption,” explained Selzer.

Nearly forty years ago, the Legislature passed and Governor Robert D. Ray signed Iowa’s bottle bill. The law has since made Iowa a nationally renowned leader in recycling. It has saved tens of millions of containers from entering our landfills, waterways, and ditches and helped created hundreds of good Iowa jobs.

The recent poll conducted by Selzer shows that the current law wins almost universal support. Nearly nine in ten (88%) active Iowa voters say the bottle bill has been good for the state. Troy Willard, owner of the Can Shed Redemption Center in Cedar Rapids whose facility handled over 100 million cans, glass and plastic bottles last year, agrees. “The bottle bill has been good for our environment, has been good for our economy, and has been good for our state. Governor Ray and then-Representative Terry Branstad shared a vision 39 years ago to make Iowa’s Bottle Bill the cornerstone of Iowa’s highly successful, integrated, and multi-faceted recycling processes. Countless civic and community organizations, schools, charities, and churches have used the bottle bill to raise money to make a difference in the lives of those around us.”

The recent poll further shows that nearly four in five support keeping the law in some form; if anything, voters are open to expansion. Representative Andy McKean (R-Anamosa) concurs, “I was first elected to represent Jones County in the Iowa House in 1979 when the bottle bill first took effect. I witnessed the immediate positive impact of the bill and would like to see it expanded and enhanced as part of a comprehensive statewide recycling program.”

Recent bottle bill repeal legislation, House Study Bill 163, was passed in the House Environmental Protection Committee. According to Mick Barry, the President of Mid America Recycling (Iowa’s largest recycling facility), repealing the bottle bill is not the answer moving forward. “Collectively, the bottle bill and single stream recycling work hand in hand to make Iowa one of the top five recycling states in the country. Repealing

the bottle bill would require facilities like Mid America Recycling to bear the responsibility to recycle glass. This would force the recycling facilities to charge Iowa cities for the additional costs; additional costs that would ultimately fall to the taxpayers.”

Senator Mark Segebart (R-Vail) agrees with Barry. “The Iowa bottle bill has been one of the most effective government programs in Iowa that has been successful for almost four decades,” said Senator Mark Segebart (R-Vail). “Repealing the bottle bill is not the answer.”

About the Poll: Between February 23rd and 26th, 2017, Selzer & Company conducted a poll of 700 active registered voters in the state of Iowa, with the purpose of assessing Iowa voters’ support for or opposition to the bottle bill, which governs deposits and redemptions for certain cans and bottles. A random sample was drawn from active records in the Iowa voter registration list. Responses were weighted by age, sex, and congressional district to match the proportions found in all active voter registration records in Iowa.

- The current law wins almost universal support. Nearly nine in ten (88%) active Iowa voters say the bottle bill has been good for the state.
- Nearly four in five support keeping the law in some form; if anything, voters are open to expansion.
- Every demographic group identified favors keeping or expanding the law by strong majorities, including:
 - Every age group: Under age 35 (70%) to those ages 55 and over (83%).
 - Every party alliance: Republicans (74%), Democrats (81%), and independents (78%).
 - Every congressional district: From the 4th CD (72%) to the 2nd CD (82%).
 - Every community type: It’s very nearly as popular in the rural areas (77%) as in the metro areas (79%).
- Large majorities agree with messages about the benefits of the bottle bill and its consequences. For five of these statements, a majority of the respondents not only agree, but agree strongly:
 - The combination of the bottle bill and curbside recycling programs is the best way to decrease the amount of materials going into landfills (89% agree, including 54% who agree strongly).
 - Because of the bottle bill, there is less litter in public places in Iowa (85% agree, including 53% who agree strongly).
 - If the bottle bill were ended, people would not bother with recycling and a lot more bottles and cans would end up in landfills (81% agree, including 53% who agree strongly).
 - There should be a national bottle bill so people in every state would have an incentive to recycle (78% agree, including 51% who agree strongly).
 - The bottle bill helps charities such as Cub Scouts, Brownies, and other groups who collect cans and bottles from others to raise money for their organizations (88% agree, including 51% who agree strongly).

For more information, including the latest updates on the Iowa Bottle Bill, visit www.IowaBottleBill.com