

New York Bottle Bill FAQ

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Q: Why do you oppose the New York Bottle Bill?

A: I am a conservationist first and water bottler second. As the bottler of Keeper Springs, I produce a brand that donates 100% of its profits to the environment.

I oppose this bill for several specific reasons, but the main one is: we can do much better and now is the time to do it.

In its current form, the New York Bottle Bill hurts recycling efforts by communities and cities – it's seems to be more a revenue raising effort by the state than a sincere effort to promote and support maximal recycling. I will stand behind a bottle bill that promotes a cleaner solution and comprehensive recycling program, but.

Also, this bill exempts sugar-based beverages from the five cent deposit, encouraging consumers, especially poorer ones, to choose cheaper drinks loaded with sugar and empty calories. We need a bottle bill that promotes healthy options like bottled water.

I know our state leaders can produce a modern bottle bill that is pro-environment and pro-health and I urge them to do so.

Q: How does the New York Bottle Bill hurt recycling efforts?

A: It threatens comprehensive recycling programs by limiting where bottles can be returned and increasing handling fees. Also, the funds created by this bottle bill go into the treasury and are *not* earmarked for any pro-environmental or pro-recycling programs.

Q: What would you envision as an ideal bottle bill?

A: In modernizing the NY bottle bill we should look to key examples from other states.

The state of California uses its deposit and processing fees to operate a fair and comprehensive recycling system. It gives consumers the traditional return options at supermarket-based and independent recycling centers, but most

notably, if a consumer puts their bottles in a curbside bin, the redemption money goes to support that local curbside recycling program.

A proper bottle bill would also promote healthy drink options, rather than incentivising consumers to buy sugar-based drinks. Maine's law has expanded to capture more bottled drinks including water, tea, beer, and even wine.

Q: Does the New York bottle bill negatively impact your business interests?

A: As a bottler for Keeper Springs and an environmental conservationist, my business' success rests on the promotion of consumer recycling efforts and healthy beverage options. The Bill has some negative effects on our business, but the real reason to oppose the bill is that it does not create a good long-term system or the proper incentives for promoting recycling or public health – and there are much better alternatives.

Of course I support bottle deposit laws and recycling requirements. Keeper Springs' profits benefit clean rivers and water.

Our business benefits, as do consumers, from a level playing field and the promotion of healthy, convenient beverage options. This bill should not favor unhealthy sugar-based beverages or store brand bottled water.

Q: As an active environmentalist, how do you support the bottled water industry knowing it is a significant source of waste?

A: I believe that the bottled water business is built on a consumer demand for reliability, convenience and quality and that it will continue to be a part of our society. I also have spent a good part of my life promoting investment in public water supplies; I still do, and I support maximizing recycling efforts in our communities.

At Keeper Springs, we sell great spring water and donate all of our profits to keeping our rivers and waters clean. We would welcome requirements that our packaging be biodegradable and/or that the bottles be returnable to manufacturers. We believe in having bottle deposits both in principle and in practice. In the case of New York, where it is clear that the political will exists to create a new bottle deposit program, we can enact a much more comprehensive, public health friendly deposit law that supports the ultimate goal of 100% recycling of all plastic packaging, rather than the inadequate one at hand that will have significant long-term negative effects on recycling and public health.