

Dear GCFM Board Members and District Directors: 3/20/2012

As you know, our Board endorsed the Updated Bottle Bill (HR 890/S1650) for its important environmental and conservation impact. As your president, I testified in favor of this bill at hearings last July at the State House. You also know that the GCFM was instrumental in passing the first Bottle Bill way back in 1983. Now it is time for this update.

It is IMPERATIVE that we pull out all the stops to support this bill NOW. It MUST be reported out of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy **BEFORE MARCH 21** or it will not have a chance to pass this year.

REASONS GCFM SUPPORTS THE UPDATED BOTTLE BILL:

- Keeps up with all the "new age" drinks: non-carbonated beverages, water, iced tea, juice/sports drinks.
- Strong public support...over 77% of the public supports updating the Bottle Bill, according to a statewide poll conducted January 2011 by MassINC Polling Group.
- Over 100 organizations support the Updated Bottle Bill, including Sierra Club and Mass Audubon and GCFM
- There is lots of legislator support: 16 Senate sponsors and 66 House sponsors
- The bill is endorsed by 205 municipalities and will save towns \$7M annually on costs related to litter cleanup
- MA is running out of landfill space-most of the 1.3B containers the updated Bill will cover are not recycled
- Passage will cut down on litter in our parks, along our roads and in our waterways!
- The Bill will increase recycling-only 22% of non-deposit containers are recycled vs.80% of deposit ones.
- Recycling saves energy and oil...there is high demand for the recycled plastics, made from petroleum.
- Estimated 500 "green" jobs will be created and small family-owned redemption centers will stay in business
- The bill allows small stores to opt out of redeeming so there is no undue burden.

GCFM has 12,400 members and we can help make it happen!! The bill needs to be reported out of Committee, then passed in both the House and Senate, and then signed by Governor Patrick.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY: Make 2 quick phone calls:

1. CALL your State Senator and ask them to support the bill.
2. CALL your State Representative and ask them to support the bill.

To find your legislators and their phone numbers, go to www.wheredoivotema.com. Just enter your address and scroll down for the information.

"Hello. My name is _____ and I live at _____. I am a Board member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts and I am calling about the Updated Bottle Bill (HR890/S1650). This bill is very important to me and to the 12,400 GCFM members for many environmental and conservation reasons. I would like to see the bill passed this session. 77% of MA residents support this bill, 206 Massachusetts towns have endorsed it (check the attached list to see if your town has), over 100 organizations support it, and many businesses feel it will be fine for the economy. I urge you to help get it out of Committee before March 21st, and support it when it comes up for a vote on the floor. I hope I can count on you. Thank you."

Most likely, you will NOT be talking to the legislators themselves, but to staff who answer the phones. Give them the message to pass along to the legislator. You can also leave the message if there is an answering machine. It's ok to just read the message as written above. Do not be intimidated to make these calls-staff rarely ask for further information or question you about your support. They are generally just tallying the number of calls they receive on various issues. Please make phone calls rather than send emails....phone calls are more highly regarded by legislators.

TIME IS CRITICAL....EVERY CALL COUNTS...this is IMPORTANT work you are doing!!

A letter similar to this has been sent to all GCFM club presidents with an email for them to forward to their members asking them to make phone calls. We can really make a difference if we all get to those calls!

Heidi Kost-Gross
President, Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

*IF YOUR LEGISLATOR IS ON THE FOLLOWING LIST: These legislators are on the Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee and are supportive of the Bill. If you are in any of these districts, please substitute the message below for the one in the attached sample email:

Senator Ben Downing (Chair), Pittsfield

Senator Marc Pacheco, Taunton

Senator Jamie Eldridge, Acton

Rep Kate Hogan, Stow

Rep John Rogers, Norwood

Rep Walter Timilty, Milton

Rep Carlo Basile, Boston

Rep Tackey Chan, Quincy

Rep John Mahoney, Worcester

Rep Randy Hunt, Sandwich

Message: "We appreciate your support of the Updated Bottle Bill (H890S/1650); as you know there's little time left until the March 21 deadline for committees to report out bills. As a member of the TUE Committee, your leadership is key. Please speak to the House Chair John Keenan and the Senate Chair Ben Downing, as well as the Speaker DeLeo, and ask them to give the bill a favorable report."

If not, just use the script in the email above.