

Dear Chairwoman Gobi and Chairman Pignatelli,

I am testifying today to encourage the Committee to affirm the Commonwealth's commitment to a clean environment by supporting the favorable passage of **S.493 – An Act re-establishing the Clean Environment Fund.**

The Clean Environment Fund was initially established along with the “bottle bill” in 1989, which attached a 5 cent deposit to soda, beer, malt beverage and sparkling water containers. The intent was that abandoned deposits from containers not returned to redemption centers would be used to support recycling, composting, solid waste reduction and other environmental programs. However, from FY1990 to FY2002, only 27 percent or \$60 million of those funds went into the CEF, with the other 73 percent - \$166 million - funding Department of Environmental Protection overhead costs.

The CEF was dismantled during the recession, with all unclaimed deposit funds going directly into the state's General Fund.

Today, as we face an acute climate crisis and municipalities are faced with the continuing need to come up with innovative solid waste solutions, as well means by which to improve and maintain public recreation lands, there is no better time to re-establish this fund.

Under this proposal, 40 percent of all money collected by the commissioner of revenue from unreturned beverage containers, as well as any appropriation of other monies authorized by the General Court specifically designated to be credited to the fund, and any income derived from the investment of amounts credited to the fund, will be deposited in the Clean Environment Fund, which will be administered by the Secretary of Energy and the Environment.

Not less than 60 percent of the money credited annually to the fund shall be used to provide funding for state and municipal solid waste reduction, recycling, littering, and composting programs and initiatives; outreach programs; sustainable material recovery programs and initiatives; and recycling equipment and infrastructure improvements.

Any remaining amounts credited annually to the fund shall be used for improvements to state parks, state forest recreation areas and state reservations that are under control of the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation; provided the improvements, if applicable, meet or exceed the current Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards established by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Restoring this fund will assist municipalities in developing smart, sustainable waste-management strategies and in serving as responsible environmental stewards.

As we endeavor to maintain the place of our Commonwealth as a national leader on environmental policy, we must do so in a way that benefits all. For that reason, I hope that the Committee supports the passage of this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.