



**Testimony Neither for Nor Against HB 4013-A
Relating to wine packaging; declaring an emergency
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Sarah Nichols, Director of Government Affairs at CLYNK
February 27, 2024**

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment, my name is Sarah Nichols and I am the Director of Government Affairs at CLYNK. We are testifying Neither for Nor Against HB 4013-A but believe that our successful experience collecting and recycling wine bottles through our bag drop redemption system is relevant to your conversation about this bill.

[CLYNK](#) is a consumer-centered, circularity solutions provider with an active and successful bag drop redemption in multiple States, including Maine where wine and liquor bottles were added to bottle bill program in 1990. We began processing containers in 2005, and we helped the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) establish bag drop in Oregon via a technology licensing partnership in 2010, and OBRC now owns the platform that operates there today.

We know from experience that it's entirely feasible to collect wine bottles in a bag drop program because we already do it at scale. People return wine bottles in the bags with their other containers, and about 8.4% of the containers we receive are in glass. In Maine, people have an additional incentive to return wine and liquor bottles, which carry a deposit of 15 cents, and the rest of the containers are 5 cents. It's simple to assign a different value to the containers in our processing facility as needed.

We also facilitate the use of reusable, refillable glass bottles through our bag drop system. For example, we partner with Smiling Hill Farm in Maine to collect their reusable glass milk containers. While these containers are exempt from the bottle bill, the company opts to place a deposit on their containers. When they come through the CLYNK bag drop system, they are easily counted and returned to the farm for reuse, and we were able to collect 54,688 refillable milk containers with this program last year. We believe that the future of beverage packaging is refillable, and that bottle bill programs are the best way to get those bottles returned, cleaned, and reused.

Like Oregon, Maine also passed an Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Law in 2021, and there was no question that our 40+ year old bottle bill would remain separate and intact as the "gold standard" for beverage container recycling, with about a 75% return rate. Voluntary municipal recycling programs have much lower return rates. Glass is problematic in municipal single-sort bins, where it often shatters and contaminates the other recycling streams, and often ends up in landfills. Environmental outcomes are improved when glass bottles are managed in a bottle bill program. There, the glass is collected in a large volume, kept clean, and can be sorted by color which allows it to have a higher chance of being recycled.

We hope that this information is useful to the Committee. We would like to extend an invitation for you to visit our facilities so that you can see how the bag drop program works to accommodate both glass and refillable containers. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, my email address is snichols@clynk.com.