



### Bottle Bill Blues

Recently, the current version of the Bigger Better Bottle Bill (BBBB) fell victim to the latest New York State budget negotiations and was never brought to the floor of the state legislature for a vote. This bill has been proposed now for several years and support needs to continue and grow if it is to be passed in the near future.

When the first bottle bill was passed 25 years ago, a five cent refundable deposit was required on soda and beer cans and bottles. In addition, water, sports and fruit drinks as well as iced tea, etc., accounted for a small portion of the beverage container market. Today these containers for noncarbonated drinks make up a large part of the waste stream. Most of these drinks are single use and may not make it home or into a recycling bin. As with the first bottle bill, I believe this new bill would greatly reduce the amount of litter in our parks, roads and neighborhoods.

Of equal importance are the deposits on unreturned bottles and cans. These funds now go to manufacturers of the drinks. The new bill would channel these funds into an environmental benefit fund that could be used for needed environmental projects, especially infrastructure. Estimates of revenue that could be produced are between \$100 and \$150 million dollars. While this is only a portion of the infrastructure requirements for New York State, it is a much needed addition and a relatively painless way for the people of our state to fund the improvements. Many of the water and sewer lines are 30, 50 and even 70 years old, with some over a century old.

The last major infusion of capital in our wastewater treatment plants was back in the 1970s, over 30 years ago. These facilities are showing their age and are in need of rehabilitation and upgrades. The infrastructure of the State of New York is very important to the vitality of our towns, cities and villages. However, there are some versions of the bill that do not put the unclaimed deposits in an environmental benefit fund. I urge you to contact your Senate and Assembly representatives and let them know that you want them to support the Bigger Better Bottle Bill and have the unclaimed deposits earmarked for an environmental benefit fund.

### Just One More

A reminder that our Just One More Program is underway and we have had a number of people take advantage of the membership offers. If you sign up a new active member, both you and the member get a Lands' End Pima Polo shirt. In addition, if you sign up five new members – it's not hard if you try – you will be entered in the drawing for a golf get-away weekend at the Sagamore Hotel on Lake George. Given the amount of people in this category at present, your chances of winning are very favorable. So consider approaching some of the people you know and ask them to become members. When you sign up a new member, they are introduced to all of the benefits that you have enjoyed. In addition, the new members will have the opportunity to help continue NYWEA's mission to educate our members, municipal officials and the public.

### Scholarships and Awards

I would like to bring your attention again to two very important programs, Scholarships and Awards. Our Scholarship Program is halfway to its goal of \$1 million dollars by the year 2010. Pledges made five years ago have been completed and we sincerely thank those individuals and businesses for their support. We are now asking for your continued support. If you have not pledged or renewed your pledge, please consider doing so. I can tell you that the students who receive the scholarships deserve your support. In addition, we all need to consider giving back to our industry so that it may continue into the future.

Our Awards Program is an opportunity to recognize our members who have provided extraordinary or long and faithful service to their community or NYWEA. However, we only give out less than half of the awards available from the Water Environment Federation and NYWEA. There is still time to fill out an award nomination. You can find the nomination form and a description of all the awards and requirements on the NYWEA website at [www.nywea.org](http://www.nywea.org).

### 80th Annual Meeting

I would also encourage you to start thinking about the 80th Annual Meeting at the Marriott Marquis in New York in February 2008. A call for abstracts for papers for this meeting is available on the website – please consider submitting one for presentation. In addition, this is an excellent opportunity to exhibit equipment or services. However, I encourage you to act quickly as the exhibit spaces sell out in a hurry. Whatever you decide to do, I hope you will attend the meeting to meet old friends, make new ones, receive training and contact hours or view new equipment.

Have a safe and healthy summer. Enjoy reading this edition of *Clearwaters*, and I look forward to being in contact with you again in our Fall issue.

Tom Lauro, PE

