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***SAMPLE PRESENTATION***  
**New York Expanded Bottle Bill**

Andrew Radin made the following presentation in 2003, using facts about the volume of containers wasted, to persuade the New York legislature to adopt an expanded beverage container deposit law.

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**Testimony Before the  
Assembly Committee on  
Environmental Conservation**

March 10, 2003

***The Recycling Reality of Non-Returnable Containers;  
A Local Community Perspective***

By: Andrew J. Radin  
Director of Recycling and Waste Reduction  
Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA)

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Good morning. My name is Andrew Radin. I am the Director of Recycling and Waste Reduction for the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency - OCRRA. OCRRA's recycling program, Operation Separation, has received the Governor's Award for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Reduction, as well as the National Recycling Coalition's Award for the Best Urban Recycling Program in the United States. We are very proud of these awards and the remarkable 69% recycling rate maintained by the 33 municipalities that participate in our program, including the City of Syracuse.

I am pleased to provide information today about what is happening to tons of non -returnable beverage containers, in a county that has received national recognition for its recycling program. How much is in fact recycled, versus how much is tossed away as trash or litter? How do the recycling rates of returnable containers actually compare to those for non -returnable containers? I will share results of a detailed and recent analysis that answers these questions (excerpts of study attached).

From a less scientific standpoint, I will also share some observations about the materials that we have found in over one million pounds of litter.

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In Onondaga County, we have had a mandatory recycling law since 1990. In addition to paper items, the local recycling requirements include a variety of beverage containers, too, such as

glass and plastic bottles, and aluminum cans. To date, our community has invested well over one million dollars in educating residents, schools, and businesses about recycling. Each year, OCRRA oversees an ambitious media campaign to maintain a high level of recycling public awareness and participation.

We also have a team of recycling specialists who each day, spread out across the area to provide retailers, school janitors, restaurant owners, and apartment managers with all the tools and information to implement top-notch recycling programs. These tools include a variety of containers, posters and decals, offered at no charge, to make recycling easy for our community.

As a result, we have recycled over 12 billion pounds of material in Onondaga County since 1990, including a wide variety of paper products, beverage containers, and other materials generated by residents, as well as the commercial and industrial sectors.

But in spite of our very best efforts, capturing non-returnable beverage containers for recycling remains elusive.

In 1998, SCS Engineers conducted a detailed Waste Quantification and Characterization Study for OCRRA. SCS has conducted over 120 similar studies for communities across the country, including Chicago, Seattle, and Los Angeles, as well as Broome County, Steuben County, and New York City here in our own state.

The study concluded that a huge percentage of recyclable, non returnable beverage containers are generally trashed in Onondaga County

First we'll take a look at **PLASTIC BOTTLES:**

- Nearly 84% of #1 P.E.T. non-returnable plastic bottles - typically bottled water - end up as trash ; only 16% are recycled. In comparison, 77% of PET #1 returnable plastic containers are recycled. The study indicates that only 200 tons of over 1,200 tons of non-returnable plastic are recycled each year.

What about **GLASS BOTTLES:**

- 68.5% of non-returnable glass bottles never see a recycling bin; 31.5% are recycled. Over 95% of returnable glass containers are recycled . Some 7,221 tons of non-returnable glass bottles are generated in Onondaga County, but according to the study, only 2,671 tons are recycled.

Again, these are the results for a community that last year recycled over 700,000 tons of material, and is a national leader in recycling.

It is clear that the Bottle Bill makes a difference - a big difference. Bottles and cans are recycled at dramatically higher rates when they are part of the Bottle Bill

I'm sure that much will be said about the use of unclaimed deposits, in the event that our state's bottle bill is expanded to include non-carbonated beverages. Maintaining an effective countywide recycling program is expensive, in excess of one million dollars annually. OCRRA would of course welcome any funds to maintain our community's commitment to reduce and recycle waste before disposal. However, our main concern is twofold: one, expand recycling for these non-carbonated beverage containers and, two, to reduce litter. We could certainly understand and support the state utilizing unclaimed deposits for other needs in light of the current budget shortfall.

