

Excerpts from

Message to NSDA's membership

William L. Ball, III
NSDA President
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. . . Here in the United States soft drinks are a part of nearly everyone's lives. Availability of our products has reached a point not even dreamed about more than a century ago when this fledgling industry was working hard to win public approval of its products, and to develop manufacturing and distribution systems. . .

. . . we have succeeded in bringing together the most intense competitors on neutral territory to respond to common, non-competitive threats.

. . . As you will read in the very brief summaries of 1998 activity that follow, we were successful this past year in meeting a number of non-competitive threats to our industry's well-being. And as long as government continues to inject itself into our businesses, NSDA will be there to lead the response on behalf of its member companies.

Protecting Equity Through Legislative Leadership

Forced Container Deposit bills can cost consumers and the soft drink industry millions of dollars. Bottle bills or bottle bill expansion bills were defeated or tabled in eight states in 1998: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Vermont. A proposed bottle bill ballot initiative for Washington, D.C. was rejected by the city Board of Elections.

However, Kentucky remains a serious bottle bill threat. Although deposit opponents were able to prevent passage of bottle bill legislation in the last legislative session, a task force of legislators and industry representatives was created to study container deposit legislation and other ways to address Kentucky's litter problem. NSDA is leading a coalition that insures industry concerns and environmental stewardship are accurately represented before the task force, the legislature and the public. The Kentucky Task Force on Container Deposits will issue a report to the legislature no later than September 1999.

The beginning of 1999 already has seen a flood of forced container deposit legislative activity. Increasingly, legislators and environmentalists are blaming the beverage industry for litter problems and are seizing on discriminatory beverage container legislation as a means to promote increased "producer responsibility" for packaging.

Recognizing the serious flaws in "bottle bills" passed by other states, no state has implemented a new forced container deposit law since 1982. However, eleven states - California,

Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Virginia have introduced legislation to implement or expand forced container deposits in 1999. NSDA expects additional proposals.

Additionally, NSDA is working with industry representatives and state and local organizations on bottle bill replacement legislation in several states.

Coalition Building is a major role for NSDA. In 1998, NSDA helped establish and manage coalitions of allied associations, businesses and organizations to defeat discriminatory beverage container proposals in the District of Columbia, Kentucky, Massachusetts and Vermont. NSDA used its coalition building skills to raise funds for the successful effort in Montana to overturn that state's voter-passed ban on corporate contributions to ballot campaigns. State and Local Affairs also is building coalitions to aid the effort under way to rid plumbing codes of language requiring attachment of unnecessary equipment to water lines of soft drink fountain dispensers.

Research is an increasingly important NSDA contribution to the soft drink industry. In the states and in Washington, D.C., well designed and professionally-gathered research can make the difference in legislative and regulatory fights. NSDA leads the industry in polling, litter studies, economic impact studies and other key research. This major contribution to the soft drink industry arsenal of weapons is being refined and is growing.

Environmental Leadership

NSDA is working with the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR) and other industry trade groups to initiate special programs at the local level designed to get more single-serve and other PET containers into the recycling stream. Additionally, NSDA defended the soft drink industry in the media, and specifically in New Mexico, Georgia and Virginia, against special interest groups' call for mandated use of recycled content in soft drink PET packaging.

