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Balestracci lends support to statewide 'bottle bill'

Old Saybrook First Selectman Michael Pace has called upon Guilford's leader to lobby with him for a bill that "will relieve the burden" of unclaimed bottles and cans on municipalities.

By Kristen Daley
Staff Writer

Guilford First Selectman Carl Balestracci Jr. will lobby in support of a bill to devote \$16.4 million in unclaimed bottle deposits to support recycling in all Connecticut municipalities.

Balestracci was called upon by Old Saybrook First Selectman Michael Pace to support the bill. Pace serves as chairman of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority's board of directors. CRRRA is a statewide solid waste management authority, which was created in 1973.

In a Feb. 19 letter to Balestracci, Pace explained that when Connecticut's "Bottle

Bill" was enacted, the legislature "softened the blow" of the law on the beverage industry by allowing them to keep unclaimed nickel deposits.

"The world has changed since 1978, yet after a quarter century, the beverage industry is still subsidized millions of dollars each year to follow state law," Pace wrote.

"While the bottlers and distributors collect your nickels, your community is bearing the burden of the unclaimed bottles and cans in you trash disposal fees," he continued, noting that millions of cans and bottles are still being thrown in the trash.

According to Pace, House Bill 6044 will relieve the burden that the unclaimed bottles and cans impose upon municipalities.

Balestracci will speak in support of the bill at an upcoming legislative hearing.

"I'm very, very much in favor of the bill," said Balestracci, who said it is "long overdue" that the money come back to municipalities.

Balestracci added that he will lobby for the support of the bill by state representatives and senators.