

Adirondack Daily Enterprise  
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Bottle Bill didn't hike water price

To the editor:

Two years ago, as national beverage companies were struggling to prevent the NYS Legislature from passing the Bigger Better Bottle Bill, a cadre of lobbying organizations emerged from nowhere to defend the beverage industry. They were armed with dire predictions of price increases that would result from passage of the bill. These groups had very innocent, neutral-sounding names unrelated to the enormous beverage companies that supported them.

You may recall the January 2008 press release from "New Yorkers for Real Recycling Reform." In it they claimed, "A case of 24 bottles of water that now sells for \$4.99 will cost \$8.59 - a whopping 72 percent increase." This was typical of their gloom and doom. Of course, such a precise prediction is impressive. They cited a consultant who had helped them arrive at the figure.

You may also recall that the Adirondack Council, NYPIRG and a host of other organizations supporting the BBBB called the industry's claims nonsense. Beverage industry lobbyists dismissed our protests and claimed we didn't understand their business.

Well, some time has passed since the bill was signed into law, and since the lawsuits aimed at scuttling the BBBB were concluded. A quick survey of the larger supermarket chains in the region - conducted Friday, March 5, 2010 - showed that the price for bottled water has not changed significantly since 2008. At Price Chopper, the price for 24 half-liter bottles of Poland Spring (Nestle) is \$5. At Grand Union, the price for a case of Poland Spring or Aquafina (PepsiCo) is \$5.99 - about the same as it was there in 2008. The price was similar at Tops Markets and Wegman's. In some places, the price seems to have fallen a bit.

New Yorkers did the right thing when they supported the expanded bottle bill. The result is cleaner parks and roadsides, with far fewer discarded plastic water bottles. Deposits ensure much higher rates of recycling. They divert a huge amount of plastic from municipal landfills. And it didn't hurt the beverage industry or the consumer. Best of all, taxpayers are finally getting back some of the money leftover when consumers don't return their empty bottles. The bottlers used to keep it all.

Sincerely,

John F. Sheehan  
Director of communications  
The Adirondack Council  
Albany