

State Grange Testifies For Bottle Bill

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania State Grange legislative director testified Monday before the House State Government Committee that passage of a returnable container law would create more jobs, lead to less energy consumption and fewer livestock injuries and deaths. Brenda Shambaugh, Pa. Grange legislative director, said long-standing Grange policy backs HB 922, which calls for a 5-cent deposit on non-biodegradable beverage containers to encourage even

more recycling across the state. "Grange members have valid reasons for advocating this type of legislation," Shambaugh said. "Many of our members have lost valuable livestock and ruined expensive machinery from tossed bottles and cans. Many times livestock suffers needlessly because bottles and cans are thrown into pastures. These animals are severely cut by broken glass or on sharp metal edges. Permanent damage or loss of life is a real threat for these innocent

victims." As an advocate for rural Pennsylvania, the Grange is a leading force in agricultural and rural issues. The Grange, with over 31,000 members in 66 counties, is a rural, agricultural and community service organization dedicated to improving the lives of rural Pennsylvanians through legislative action, offering member services and participating in community affairs. Shambaugh said farmers also face monetary loss because people

carelessly litter in their fields. "Machinery breakdown is another serious problem caused by bottles and cans aimlessly tossed aside," Shambaugh said. "Glass and metal can ruin machinery worth thousands of dollars and each time a tractor tire has to be replaced a farmer loses over \$500. Moreover, farmers regularly deal with the nuisance of spending hours picking up other people's garbage." Shambaugh cited a study of Delaware farmers that shows an

average annual loss of \$2,500 due to litter. "One can assume that Pennsylvania farmers would have similar losses," Shambaugh said. "The only difference is that Pennsylvania's population is much larger than Delaware, so the litter problem would be compounded." A second benefit of a "bottle bill" law is less energy consumption. Shambaugh said a study in New York state showed a 20 to 67 percent decrease in energy consumption: an annual savings of between 2 and 4.3 million barrels of oil and \$50 to \$70 million. "Currently, energy wasted by 60 billion throwaways represents the electricity needs of 9.1 million Americans a year; gasoline to fuel 2.1 million cars a year; or the natural gas needed to heat 2 million three bedroom homes in the mid-Atlantic region for eight months," Shambaugh said. Refuting claims that jobs would be lost with passage of returnable container legislation, Shambaugh said additional jobs were created in states that have this law. A total of 4,648 jobs were gained in Michigan; 1,800 in Massachusetts, and 500 in Vermont. "Looking at the employment situation, Pennsylvanians without jobs would benefit from this legislation," Shambaugh said. "HB 922 is vital to preserve our Commonwealth economically, environmentally and aesthetically."

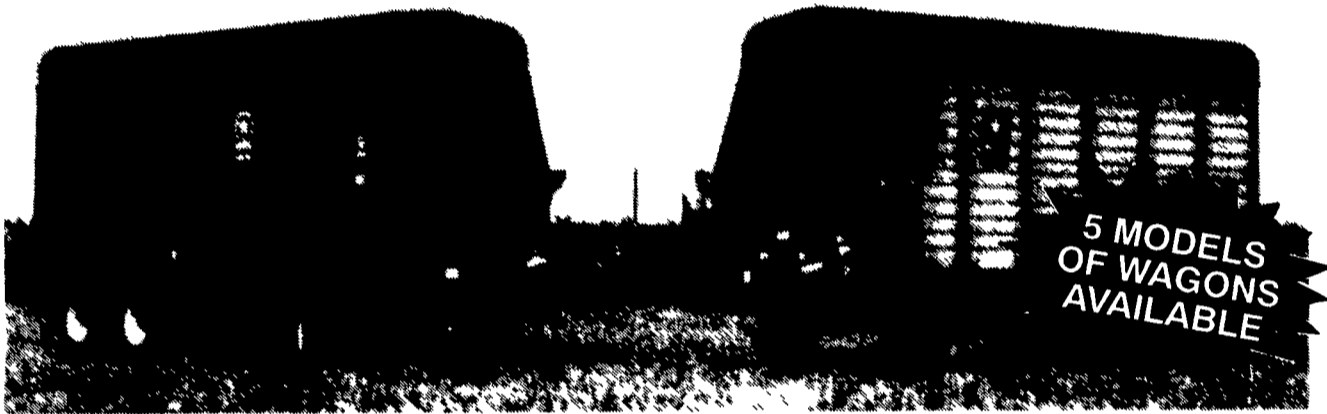
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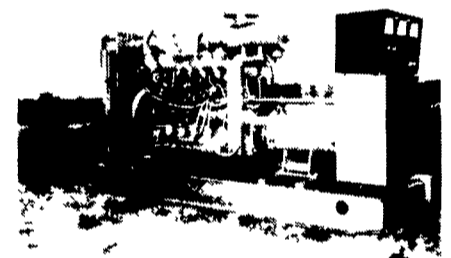
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