

## VBA Legislative Update – Week 16 May 3, 2026

### → The Week Ahead for VBA

Senate Natural Resources and Energy. The committee's [agenda](#) includes consideration of [H.915 An act relating to establishing an extended producer responsibility program for beverage containers](#). See discussion below.

### → Update on Miscellaneous Alcohol Bill.

[H.921 An act relating to alcoholic beverages](#). On Friday, the Senate Finance Committee voted 7-0-0 to approve H921 with no further amendments. The bill will be up for action on the Senate floor on Wednesday (second reading) and Thursday (third reading) this week.

After approved by the Senate, the bill will go back to the House. The House will have to decide whether they can live with the Senate changes, whether they want to send the bill back with additional changes, or whether they want to ask for a conference committee.

### → Update on Bottle Bill.

[H.915 An act relating to establishing an extended producer responsibility program for beverage containers](#). The Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee continues to discuss increasing the handling fee on all beverage containers covered by the bottle bill from **\$.035 to \$.045 per container**.

The Department of Environmental Conservation convened a meeting of stakeholders last week to see if an agreement could be hammered out. At this point, it seems like stakeholders might agree to a temporary increase in handling fee only until the Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) is stood up and begins negotiations with redemption centers. Under the new model, the PRO will negotiate fair compensation to redemption centers as part of their Stewardship Plan.

As a reminder, here is a very high-level summary of the bill as passed by the House:

- **PRO Formation:** By January 1, 2027, all deposit initiators of covered beverage containers must apply to join a Secretary of ANR-approved PRO. Participation becomes mandatory by March 1, 2028.
- **Stewardship Plan:** The PRO must submit a stewardship plan by January 1, 2028, covering how it will collect containers, compensate redemption centers, educate consumers, and ensure convenient statewide access (e.g. at least 3 redemption points per county).
- **Deposits:** The existing 5-cent deposit on most beverages is retained;
- **Redemption Goals:** A 75% redemption rate by July 1, 2029, rising to 80% by July 1, 2032.
- **UPC Labels:** All containers must carry a Universal Product Code/barcode (effective July 1, 2027).

- **Small Retailers:** Retailers under 5,000 sq. ft. may opt out of accepting returns once the PRO's stewardship plan is in place.
- **Audits & Oversight:** The PRO must undergo annual independent fiscal audits (beginning 2029) and program audits every five years (beginning 2033). The Secretary of Natural Resources oversees the program and can dissolve a failing PRO.
- **Funding:** Unclaimed deposits (escheats) flow into Vermont's Clean Water Fund. Temporary transfers of up to \$1 million/year in fiscal years 2030–2033 support solid waste management grants, including implementation grants to help the PRO build out infrastructure.
- **Effective Date:** July 1, 2026 (with phased-in requirements through 2028).

**Next Steps.** The Senate Natural Resources committee will continue consideration of H915 on Tuesday next week. They are tentatively scheduled to vote on the bill on Wednesday.

→ **Headlines of Note**

- [Feds release education funds owed to Vermont school districts](#)
- [Lawmakers race to finish data privacy bill amid outcry from businesses and medical providers](#)
- [FEMA announces \\$2 million in aid for 2023 flood damage](#)
- [Vermont lawmakers no longer plan on unmasking ICE](#)
- [A Vermont landlord pursues debts from tenants. His wife now helps write eviction law.](#)
- [Capitol Recap: Proposal to tax high earners stirs debate over policy, and politics, in Montpelier](#)
- [Vermont lawmakers divided over plan for property tax relief](#)