

February 26, 2024

New York State Senate
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

New York State Assembly
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Delivered Electronically

Dear New York State Senators and State Assemblymembers,

As pastors in New York, we take pride in ensuring the well-being of our congregants and our entire community. Over the years, our churches have expanded our role as centers for environmental and economic resilience. However, any proposed legislation must consider the financial difficulties it imposes on the families that occupy our pews each week.

Unfortunately, the New York State Legislature is currently considering a bill pushed by individuals who parachute into our communities to dictate what is good for us, without first listening to the community. This proposed bill would double the deposit fee for cans and bottles—an attempt to shift more financial burden on families without any accountability or plan to address New York's outdated recycling system.

At a time when many families are already struggling to make ends meet, this proposed legislation would further increase costs for families. For example, under the new bill, a 24-pack of bottled water would have an additional \$2.40 tacked on for the deposit. Such a sharp increase would be a significant blow to families already facing financial challenges.

We are all too aware that the cost of living in New York continues to rise, leading to families being priced out of neighborhoods they have called home for years. The pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities in our state, and even as we emerge from it, hard-working families and small businesses are still trying to recover. This legislation does not alleviate their burdens.

One important note is the state already collects more than \$100 million in extra revenue because of unredeemed bottles each year. If funding is the issue, why isn't that money being used to improve and reform the current recycling infrastructure? We urge the New York State Legislature to prioritize discussions on utilizing this extra revenue rather than immediately supporting the proposed legislation that burdens our parishioners with increased costs.

Ultimately, the faith-based community is committed to environmental and climate justice. Let us work together to find a solution that makes New York's recycling program as efficient and

effective as possible without adding further financial strain on New Yorkers. We stand ready to collaborate with you to explore alternative solutions that do not burden families.

Signed,

Rev. Robert Linden, Senior Pastor
Bethelite Institutional Baptist Church
Brooklyn, New York 11208

Rev. Mary Gunter, Senior Pastor
Christ Ministries Baptist Church
5 Market Street, Ellenville, NY 12428

Rev. John Marshall, Senior Pastor
New Life Baptist Church
931 Dumont Ave, Brooklyn NY 11207

Rev. Ronald Cook, Senior Pastor
Little Rock Baptist Church
375 Bristol Street, Brooklyn, NY 11212

Rev. Earl Chester, Senior Pastor
New Beginning Baptist Church
303 E 98th Street, Brooklyn NY 11212

Rev. Christopher Scott, Senior Pastor
St. Marks Baptist Church
Highland Falls, NY 10928

Rev. Wayne Stroking, Senior Pastor
New Journey Church
480-84 Bainbridge Street, Brooklyn NY 11233

Rev. Charles Slate III, Senior Pastor
Mt. Tabor Baptist Church
115 Lexington Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11238

Rev. Walter P. Aston, Senior Pastor
Metropolitan Baptist Church
1624 84th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11214

Elder Adrian Hines, Senior Pastor
Temple of New Beginnings Christian Center
82-06 Bell Boulevard, Queens Village, New York 11427

Rev. Jeffery Campbell, Senior Pastor
Crossover Baptist Church
85-12 101st Ave, Queens, NY 11416

Rev. Anthony Brazile, Senior Pastor
New Faith Community Baptist Church
99 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, New York
11233