Policy Making Activity: Designing a Georgia Bottle Bill

UGA Sustainability Seminar – Spring 2023

As part of the Integrative Problem-Solving Competency, this activity will involve some preparation.

1. Please read the linked material on Bottle Bills to familiarize yourself with the topic.

2. Next, read through the different team descriptions below. These descriptions will serve as a guide for the in-class activity, though you will be able to expand or narrow the scope based on the interests of your teammates.

3. Select the team you would like to join, and sign up for it here (before class): [GoogleDoc Link]

4. Answer the following questions for your reflection:

   a. *What?* In simple terms, what is a "bottle bill"? Have you heard of this before?
   b. *So What?* Why is this relevant to sustainability?
   c. *Now What?* Based on the team you selected, do some initial Googling and brainstorm some ideas that you want to bring to the in-class discussion. Provide your notes below.


Teams

1. <u>Legislative Sponsors</u>

Anyone can write a law in the United States. Before a law becomes a law, it is called a "bill."

All bills first have to be sponsored by someone in the legislature. This person introduces the bill to a relevant committee, where it has to get approved by the committee, before getting put up for a vote in each of the two chambers (the Senate and House of Representatives). If it passes both chambers, the bill becomes a law.

In your team, **come up with a list of potential sponsors** for a bottle bill for the state of Georgia. Try to identify several people, including at least one from each chamber (the Georgia Senate and the Georgia House of Representatives). You can find most of this information at the website for the Georgia General Assembly (https://www.legis.ga.gov/).
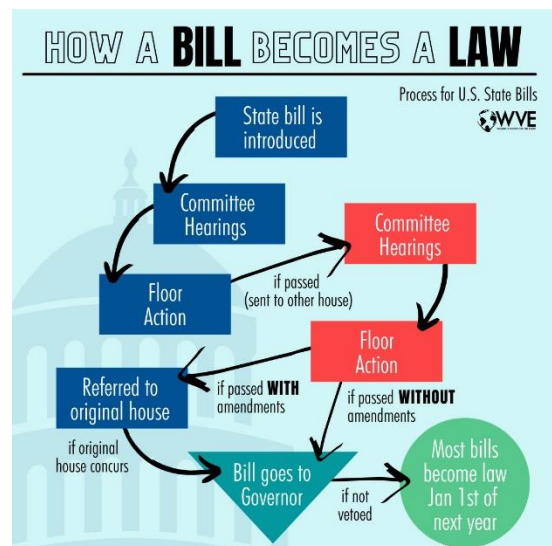
Guiding Questions:

- What committees are most relevant to this bill? Use this as a way to narrow down who might be a good fit to sponsor your bill. (Try not to stick to only one party – bills are more likely to pass if they have bipartisan support).
- Of the individuals you identified, what is their voting record on similar bills?
- Are they in any leadership positions?
- Have they sponsored any legislation with other party members?
- Where are they from? What issues are important to them and their constituents?

Phase 2: Once you have your list of potential sponsors, start drafting some text you would use for emails and meetings. How would you approach them? What would you say to try to get them on board with your legislation? Work with the Communications & Media team to help you develop your messaging.

2. Draft Policy

Ten states currently have active bottle bills. Do some research on existing laws in those states, and **put together a draft bill for the state of Georgia**. Details are important, but try to focus on big-picture structure for this exercise.

This website provides a list of each of those 10 states' laws. Use this as a starting point to look up each state's law, to determine how you might design one specific to the state of Georgia:
https://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/state-beverage-container-laws.aspx

Guiding Questions:

- What would you replicate from other states' laws? What would you change? Identify if there are certain elements that should be the core of the bill, and others that may be negotiable if necessary.
- Consider options: would you focus on only plastic, or also include aluminum cans and glass bottles?
- How would you account for changing social and economic conditions (for example, fluctuations in the price of raw materials, or in the cost of reclamation of these materials)? Your bill will need to provide some clear rules and consistency, while also ensuring that it doesn't lock the state into a system that may become cumbersome down the road.
- Are there any incentives you want to build into the bill (for example, tax incentives for companies that use reclaimed material instead of raw material in their supply chains)? What other committees/organizations would need to be involved to make that happen?

Phase 2: Once you have a basic structure for your bill, work with the Logistics Team to determine what would be needed to implement it. Does this change your priorities in any way?

3. Logistics – Funding, Transportation, Infrastructure

Your team is tasked with **determining the logistical details needed to enact the proposed law**.

- What kinds of infrastructure is needed to make a bottle bill successful in the state of Georgia?
    o Consider collection, cleaning, transportation, storage and distribution points across the state.
    o What waste management infrastructure currently exists, and how would this need to be expanded or altered to account for the additional material?
    o Where are the likely bottlenecks in the supply chain? What can you do to try to account for these bottlenecks?
    o What is your proposed timeline for instituting this new infrastructure? Try to be realistic, and consider what potential delays or contingencies might affect your plan.
    o Once this new infrastructure is created, what is needed for it to be maintained?
- How will this be funded in the short, medium, and long term?
    o The recent Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2022 includes over $275 million in grant money to support recycling programs at the local and state level. Consider this and other sources of funding that would be needed to upgrade recycling infrastructure across the state. What is required to apply for this funding, and how is this money distributed/managed?
    o Many infrastructure projects with government contracts go over-budget. How will you keep down the costs of implementation and stay within budget?

Phase 2: Work with the Draft Policy team to determine whether each of your plans encompasses the others' ideas for the bill. Determine if each of you will need to make changes to your plans, or if you want to create a list of contingencies in case the bill gets altered by other members of the Georgia state legislature before it gets passed.

4. Coalitions

This team will focus on **building a coalition of diverse actors** to support the passage of a bottle bill in Georgia. Consider your primary and secondary targets and stakeholder map.

- Brainstorm: Who are the organizations and individuals most likely to be impacted by this bill? Who are key to its success?
- Who is mostly likely to oppose it? How might you try to bring these groups on board with your bill?
- Who/what is able to influence your key decision makers?
- Who can you mobilize to get broader public support for this bill?
    o Consider your own personal experiences (for example, local breweries that might want to reduce the cost of raw materials, or University Greek life which might want to get cash back from beverage cans and bottles after parties, or artists and film-makers who can tell compelling stories, etc.).
- Develop a coalitions network to bring each of these actors on board and keep them informed of relevant actions and events. Consider your decision-making structure, timeline, and key priorities.

Phase 2: Work with the Communications & Media team to determine how you might reach each of your targets and stakeholders. Adapt your plans based on your new ideas, and work with them to develop a timeline to build visibility and momentum for the cause.

5. Communications & Media

This team will **develop a communications and media plan** to build broad support for the bill.

- Brainstorm – What are the different channels you would use to spread the message and build support for the bill?
    - Consider how different groups of people might have more or less access to different forms of media and messaging (for example, an OpEd in the Atlanta Journal Constitution would reach different audiences than a series of TikTok videos or Instagram posts).
- What kinds of information would help you make compelling messaging? Consider each of the kinds of persuasive techniques, and target your messages based on your specific audiences:
    - Ethos – appeals to one's sense of reputation, authority, morality, or justice.
    - Logos – uses logic, science, and data to make strong arguments.
    - Pathos – appeals to emotion through compelling storytelling to elicit empathy, desire, frustration, etc.
- Once you have determined each of your audiences and how you want to frame your messaging, begin drafting some sample materials for each stakeholder group and type of media.

Phase 2: Work with the Coalitions Team to determine if your messaging strategy adequately reaches each of your target audiences. Adapt your plan as necessary, and work with them to develop a timeline to build visibility and momentum for the cause.