

## THE PROBLEM

Connecticut's container deposit law (aka the "Bottle Bill") was passed as a litter-prevention measure in 1978. The program has successfully captured billions of single-serve beverage containers, but it has not been substantially updated since its original drafting. As a result, redemption centers continue to close their doors across the state and CT's bottle redemption program has become the weakest in the country with redemption rates hovering around 50%

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the need for modernization. Redemption centers remained open as mandatory businesses while grocery stores shut down their bottle return rooms, making it nearly impossible for residents to return their bottles and cans. The increase in bottle sales and decrease in returns caused CT's redemption rate to fall below 45%. Consumers lost \$10 million in deposits in 2020.

## A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

Modernizing the Bottle Bill would dramatically increase recycling, prevent litter, and create green jobs - all while saving taxpayer funds. It would also provide an opportunity to save municipalities money on waste collection and disposal.

There are 3 key components to effectively updating Connecticut's bottle bill:

- 1. Expand Accepted Beverages.** When the Bottle Bill was created, non-carbonated beverages like coffee, tea, juices and sports drinks barely existed on the market. Now they are a booming market with no incentive for returns, so CT is missing an opportunity to reclaim millions of containers. According to the Container Recycling Institute (CRI), Connecticut could capture an additional 416 million containers each year by expanding the program to include non-carbonated beverages.
- 2. Increase the Bottle Deposit from 5 to 10 cents.** Five cents provided a worthwhile incentive for returning bottles in 1978 but is worth almost nothing in 2021. With so little value, the bottle deposit is acting more like a tax than a recycling program. Increasing the bottle deposit has been shown to increase redemption rates to 90% in other states.



- 3. Increase the Handling Fee.** The handling fee for containers in CT has not kept pace with the cost of recycling them and are 2-3 cents lower than any of our neighboring states. As a result, multiple CT redemption centers have been forced to close their doors in recent years, leaving CT residents with fewer convenient options for beverage container recycling. This shifts the cost of container recycling back to the municipalities and causes the State's redemption rate to decline further. Increasing the handling fee will help these businesses to thrive and encourage new redemption centers to open, providing green jobs and increasing accessibility to redemption facilities.

**Consumer convenience & education.** Redemption centers are geographically scattered and infrequently sited in urban areas. A modernized bottle bill must include public education on the increased deposit, and how and where to return bottles and cans so that we do not inadvertently penalize our most vulnerable communities.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

### BOTTLE DEPOSIT

Each retailer in Connecticut pays a beverage distributor a 5-cent deposit on each carbonated beverage container and water bottle they purchase. Consumers then pay this deposit for each beverage container they purchase. The consumer can return the empty containers to the retailer or a redemption center to redeem their deposit. The distributor reimburses the retailer or redemption center 5-cents for each beverage container.

### HANDLING FEE

In addition to the deposit, retailers and redemption centers also receive a handling fee of 1.5 cents per beer container and 2 cents per beverage container. This fee is paid by the beverage distributor and baked into the original cost of the beverage. The handling fee is essential for redemption centers and retailers to cover their overhead cost to keep the system running.

### IS CURBSIDE GOOD ENOUGH?

Curbside is **NOT** a compatible solution with all beverage containers. Glass containers are especially problematic for recycling facilities. The Bottle Bill is currently the **ONLY** effective program for recycling glass containers and preserves the quality of plastics.

### MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Bottle Bill, contact:

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### FAST FACTS

- ◆ Beverage containers account for 40% of litter.
- ◆ Deposits have the potential to reduce beverage container litter by up to 84%.
- ◆ 81% of CT likely voters support expanding the state's bottle deposit program to include all recyclable containers (Greenberg Quinlan poll, January 2020).
- ◆ 104,000 tons of glass, plastic and aluminum are generated each year in Connecticut from beverage containers not covered by the program.
- ◆ The Bottle Bill supports 1,272 jobs throughout the state and adds \$92 million annually to the local economy.
- ◆ The Bottle Bill has generated more than \$133 million in revenue for Connecticut over the past ten years from unclaimed deposits.