



AMERICAN
BEVERAGE
ASSOCIATION

COMPREHENSIVE RECYCLING: A Responsible Alternative

Background

Bottle Bills are Not the Solution

The beverage industry recognizes the need for comprehensive recycling efforts in order to reduce waste and carbon emissions. We begin by using 100 percent recyclable packaging and we continue by lightweighting our containers and investing millions of dollars in community recycling programs across the country.

The "Bottle Recycling Climate Protection Act" (H.R. 4238 by Rep. Markey, D- Mass.) would impose a 5-cent deposit on virtually all metal, plastic and glass beverage containers smaller than one gallon. Juice, water, soda, ready-to-drink teas and beer would be assessed the fee, while dairy products, wine and distilled spirits would be exempt. The bill mandates that food stores and other retailers take back empty containers from consumers. Beverage distributors would handle those empty containers, pay a 3-cent handling fee to retailers and turn over any unclaimed deposits to state treasuries. Naturally, all of this comes at a cost as consumers are often left to pay billions of dollars to fund the program, while stores and distributors must build a duplicate recycling system, with costs passed on to their customers.

Communities are looking not only to address recycling but also decrease carbon emissions. Using bottle deposits, consumers often must travel out of their way to redeem containers, resulting in additional fuel consumption and emissions. And additional emissions would result from beverage distributors' vehicles collecting and transporting containers from stores to recycling facilities.

ABA Position

Better Ways to Recycle

Community-based recycling programs are a better way to recycle and capture more material than bottle bills. Under a bottle bill, these programs would suffer, losing \$1 billion in annual revenues. We don't need to ruin our existing recycling system to recycle more. Instead, we should leverage our investment in that system to get updated systems in place and increase participation.

The beverage industry supports a variety of recycling efforts. The American Beverage Association is a founding member of *The National Recycling Partnership* – an historic collaboration with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and grocery, food and beverage producers and retailers that are committed to improving recycling programs in the United States and reinvigorating recycling among consumers. We also support *Curbside Recycling Programs*, which provide recycling bins and regular pick-up services just like garbage pick-up; *Pay-as-you-throw programs* that encourage citizens to recycle by charging them, per bag, for the collection of trash; and *RecycleBank*, an innovative recycling program that tracks the amount consumers recycle and awards points that can be redeemed at local and national businesses.

For more information, contact American Beverage Association Government Affairs at (202) 463-6740.

1101 Sixteenth Street, NW • Washington, DC 20036 • www.ameribea.org