



April 26, 2021

Dear Senate Leaders,

**S.B. 1037 An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management provides a comprehensive and fair update to our state’s container deposit law.** It will increase recycling in Connecticut, expand container redemption options for consumers, save municipalities and taxpayers money, create green jobs, and reduce litter removal and solid waste disposal costs.

Since 1980, Connecticut’s bottle bill has successfully captured billions of single-serve beverage containers, saving taxpayers millions in recycling costs over time. Unfortunately, the bottle bill has not been updated in decades and the program urgently needs modernization. As a result, Connecticut now has the lowest performing deposit system in the world, with a redemption rate on covered containers around 49% (a 44% drop in container recycling from where the program was in 2001).

**The environment, community members, and municipal solid waste budgets bear the costs of our outdated bottle bill.** The system has not been updated over time to keep up with changing market trends and inflation: the 5-cent deposit has not been increased since 1980, handling fees are abnormally low, and many popular beverages are not included in the program. Therefore, consumers are not motivated to redeem their deposits, redemption centers are struggling to remain in business, and consumers have fewer convenient options for redemption than ever.

Unfortunately, the costs of managing this waste falls on cash-strapped municipalities, more and more containers are ending up in the trash and in Connecticut’s waste incinerators, and we have a growing litter problem affecting our communities and open spaces.

**S.B. 1037 provides a solid solution we must implement now.** These steps are a proven formula for modernizing a bottle redemption program.

- Phase 1 (July 2021)- raises the handling fees that support the cost of doing business. This step will greatly expand the number of redemption locations in the state by incentivizing small business owners to open redemption centers, and helping retailers improve their redemption facilities. This stage also requires retail chains with 10 or more locations in Connecticut to install redemption machines, to offer additional convenient redemption points throughout the community.
- Phase 2 (January 2022)- raises the refundable deposit value from 5 cents to 10 cents. The deposit increase will motivate consumers to redeem their containers and produce an immediate increase in container recycling. States with 10 cent deposits enjoy redemption rates between 80-90%. Higher redemption rates mean more efficient recycling, reduced costs for towns, and less litter. It will also create an increased demand for more bottle return points.
- Phase 3 (July 2022)- expands coverage to non-carbonated beverages, including juices, teas, sports drinks and liquor ‘nips’. Studies in other states show that higher redemption rates are achieved when higher deposit amounts are *combined* with expanded container coverage.

**A modernized bottle bill enhances consumer convenience.** S.B. 1037 requires large retailers to provide Reverse Vending Machines and allows for alternative technologies, including innovative 'bag drop' services. This creates a more profitable business model that will encourage investment into new bottle-return businesses. It also maintains existing requirements for all retailers that sell deposit containers to accept returns unless a redemption facility is located within one mile.

**S.B. 1037 is an important step toward cleaning up the environment, regaining control over our recycling infrastructure, and protecting ourselves against climate change.** If we do not update the bottle bill, the rising cost of recycling may result in an increase in deposit containers sent to the landfill or incinerated - alternatives that disproportionately affect the already overburdened communities where these facilities operate. This trend has already begun: DEEP's own data shows that over 20,000 tons of deposit-bearing PET plastic bottles alone are wasted every year in Connecticut, much of which is destined to be burned, emitting PCBs, mercury, and dioxins.

**We, the undersigned, urge immediate passage of S.B. 1037: An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management.** All of Connecticut's citizens have a right to litter-free open spaces and waterways, clean streets, and clean air. A modernized bottle bill as outlined in S.B. 1037 provides for a more efficient and equitable deposit system, while creating green jobs and saving taxpayers money.

For additional information, please see our informative [bottle bill 4 pager](#) and [FAQ](#) documents.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Connecticut Bottle Bill Works Coalition Steering Committee*

Undersigned;

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