

Call Your State Rep and Senator Today!



Help MassRecycle ensure that the Legislature updates the State's "Bottle Bill." Updating this 1983 law will reduce litter, increase recycling and provide additional funding for your local recycling program.

What is the Bottle Bill?

The Bottle Bill is the common name for Massachusetts General Law (MGL) c.94, s.321-327. The law imposes refundable deposits on beer and soda containers thus providing a financial incentive for the public to return them for recycling.

Why update the Bottle Bill?

The goal of the Bottle Bill is to target beverage containers that generate most of the litter. In 1983, when the law was created, those were beer and soda containers, and the bottle bill has been effective in reducing the number of these found in litter. Today, much of the litter comes from non-carbonated beverages (water, juice, sport drinks, etc.) that have become common over the last few years. We need to update the Bottle Bill to keep it effective. There are many others reasons to update this law – see the next page for more!

How to update the Bottle Bill?

To update the law, the Legislature must pass a bill that would expand the containers covered under the law to include away-from-home beverage containers that are not carbonated, such as water, juice, sport drink, ice tea. The updated Bottle Bill would exclude milk beverages, medicines, and infant formula. MassRecycle supports updating the Bottle Bill to include only containers 1 liter (33.5 oz) or less.

What happens to unclaimed deposits?

When a bottle is not returned for deposit (e.g. discarded as trash or placed in a regular recycling bin), the unclaimed deposit currently goes to the state's general fund. Proponents of the Updated Bottle Bill hope to designate a portion of the unclaimed bottle deposit revenue from bottles included in the updated bill for recycling related initiatives.

Would this help the state's budget problems?

Yes. The state currently receives over \$37 million per year in unclaimed deposits. It is expected that updating the Bottle Bill will generate an additional \$15-20 million in revenue.

How effective is the Bottle Bill?

In Massachusetts, 68% of deposit containers were returned in 2004. Compare this to 23% average recycling rate for beverage containers in states without a Bottle Bill.

Take Action NOW – It is Easy!

*** Call your State Representative and State Senator and send him/her this fact sheet (see box with suggested message)**

Here is how to find his/her contact information: www.mass.gov/legis/city_town.htm

*** Email MassRecycle to help us document your efforts and if you or the legislator has questions**

Send a quick email to info@massrecycle.org with the names of the state rep and senator you called and/or the questions you need answered.

*** To read the text of the proposed bills and for more information** Visit www.massbottlebill.org

Call your State Representative and Senator and say:

"I am calling to ask you to support the update of the state Bottle Bill..."

Offer to fax, email, or mail them a copy of this fact sheet.

Ask if they have received other calls from your community, if not, ask your friends to call too.



Top 10 Reasons to Update the Bottle Bill



- 1. Catch up with consumer habits** ~ Since the original Bottle Bill was implemented in 1983, many new types of beverages have been introduced to the market. More than 400 million of these new beverages are consumed each year in Massachusetts, and are not redeemable under the original Bottle Bill.
- 2. Reduce litter** ~ Recent litter studies in Massachusetts have determined that non-redeemable beverage containers are far more likely to end up as litter than deposit containers, even though there are almost twice as many deposit containers sold.
- 3. Recover and recycle valuable materials** ~ Plastic, aluminum and glass beverage containers can't be recycled back into new consumer goods and containers if they've been thrown away. About 75% of deposit containers are recycled, while less than 35% of non-deposit containers are. What a waste!
- 4. Save energy** ~ Recycling plastic, metal and glass containers requires far less energy than extracting, purifying and manufacturing them from raw materials. For example, about 20 recycled aluminum cans can be made from the energy needed to produce one can from virgin ore. Throwing one aluminum can away wastes as much energy as pouring out half that can's volume in gasoline.
- 5. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions** ~ Increased recycling reduces the amount of energy needed by industry to make products from raw materials, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 6. Create jobs and stimulate the economy** ~ Gains in employment have been demonstrated in nearly every state with a deposit system. Massachusetts gained almost 2,000 jobs with implementation of the original bottle bill, and an increased volume of recycled beverage containers would require an expansion within the recycling industry to handle the extra material.
- 7. Reduce waste** ~ Diverting millions of beverage containers from the trash to recycling markets would reduce the amount of solid waste sent to landfills and incinerators.
- 8. Generate revenue** ~ While two-thirds of deposit containers collected under the current Bottle Bill are redeemed, unclaimed deposits – about \$35 million annually – are rolled into the Massachusetts General Fund to offset the need for tax revenue. An updated bottle bill would generate an estimated fifteen to twenty million additional dollars in unclaimed deposits, which would fund recycling, water supply, and other State programs.
- 9. Support local redemption centers** ~ Redemption centers support local recycling efforts by providing a convenient recycling option to the public. Redemption centers are also a key component of fundraising efforts ("bottle drives") of many local charitable organizations, Scout Troops and school programs.
- 10. Producer Responsibility** ~ Bottle bills shift the responsibility of managing beverage container waste from taxpayers to beverage manufacturers and consumers, helping to increase municipal funding for other important local needs.
- 11. Increase recycling of away-from-home beverage containers.** An updated bottle bill complements municipal recycling programs by targeting containers that are consumed away from home that are frequently littered or thrown in the trash.

Who else supports updating the Bottle Bill?

- MassPIRG
- Environmental League of Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Sierra Club

MassRecycle is a statewide coalition made up of individuals, governments, businesses, institutions and non-profit organizations dedicated to promoting recycling. To help support our efforts or to learn more about MassRecycle visit www.massrecycle.org or call 617-338-0244.

