



Oregon's Evolving Bottle Bill

The 2011 Oregon Legislature passed with bipartisan support House Bill 3145, signed by Gov. John Kitzhaber in June 2011. The bill sets in motion several significant changes to Oregon's 40-year-old bottle bill, which is administered by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

Under the current Oregon law, people pay a 5-cent container deposit when they buy beer, soft drinks, water and flavored water in metal, glass and plastic bottles and cans three liters or less in size. They can return the empty containers to stores and receive the 5-cent refund value for each container returned. The law, originally passed in 1971, has been an iconic symbol of Oregon's love of natural beauty and conservation, and fight against litter and the throwaway mentality. Since passage of Oregon's law and similar legislation in British Columbia, nine other states and most Canadian provinces have since passed similar legislation. Oregon's law originally included only beer and soft drinks. A much-later revision to the law added bottled waters, effective January 2009.

The 2011 bill eventually expands the types of containers eligible for a refund to include juices, teas, coffees and sports drinks and any other beverage intended for human consumption except distilled liquor, wine, dairy and infant formula. OLCC may also exempt other beverages by rule. These added beverages will become refund-eligible on Jan. 1, 2018 or one year after OLCC determines that at least 60 percent of beverage containers are returned to redemption centers (instead of stores), whichever comes first.

Further, the bill provides the possibility of increasing the 5-cent refund value to 10 cents after the OLCC determines that, in each of two previous years, the number of containers returned was less than 80 percent of total number of beer, soft drink and water containers sold. OLCC cannot make this determination, under the law, prior to Jan. 1, 2016, so the earliest the refund value could rise to 10 cents would be Jan. 1, 2017.

In addition, the bill encourages development of additional "redemption centers" that will provide a convenient place for people to return their containers besides participating grocery stores. Specifically, the revised bill requires OLCC to approve a pilot project for a single beverage container redemption center operated by a distributor cooperative that is larger in scale than the two existing redemption centers located in Oregon City and Wood Village. If this pilot project is successful, more such redemption centers are expected to be built in Oregon's major population centers.

Bottle bill environmental benefits

Oregon's bottle bill helps ensure materials used to manufacture beverage containers are recycled, thus reducing the energy required to produce the containers and reducing greenhouse gases. In 2009, more than one billion beverage containers were recycled under the bottle bill. Recycling those beverage containers saved three trillion BTUs of energy, equivalent to the amount of energy in 24 million gallons of gasoline. That recycling also reduced greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 200,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents – equal to the amount of carbon dioxide produced by 40,000 cars. These savings should increase as the bottle bill's expansion goes into effect. Beverage container litter has also been substantially reduced under the bottle bill, leaving Oregon's roadsides, parks and public lands much cleaner.

Other bottle bill documents

- ▼ Frequently asked questions
- ▼ Bottle bill then and now
A history of the Oregon Bottle Bill.
- ▼ 2008 Oregon Bottle Bill Task Force
Report and research documents.

For more information

- ▼ OLCC bottle bill questions:
 - Consumer questions - **Jan Smith**, 503-872-5217; jan.smith@state.or.us
 - Questions from retailers, distributors, wholesalers and manufacturers - **Kelly Rountt**, 503-872-5007; kelly.rountt@state.or.us
 - Oregon Liquor Control Commission Oregon's Bottle Bill Web page
- ▼ Bottle bill policy, recycling data and bottle bill development: **Peter Spendelow**, DEQ solid waste analyst, 503-229-5253, toll-free in OR at 1-800-452-4011, x5253; spendelow.peter@deq.state.or.us spendelow.peter@deq.state.or.us
- ▼ For general information on bottle bills around the country, see the Bottle Bill Resource Guide. The guide, a project of the Container Recycling Institute, provides a comprehensive look at beverage container deposit laws across the U.S. and the world. Container Recycling Institute, Glastonbury, CT, 202-263-0999.
 - Bottle Bill Resource Guide
 - Container Recycling Institute

Oregon bottle bill rules:

- ▼ Oregon Revised Statute 459A.700-740
- ▼ Oregon Administrative Rule 845 Division 20
OLCC rules pertaining to Oregon Bottle Bill.

Other bottle bill links:

Beverage Container Management Board in Alberta, Canada.
British Columbia Ministry of the Environment
California Department of Conservation Division of Recycling
Information regarding California's Refund Value on beverage containers.
Encorp Pacific
Nova Scotia's Beverage Containers law
Oregon Beverage Recyclers Cooperative
RRFB Nova Scotia