

KARIN POWER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 41
MULTNOMAH AND CLACKAMAS COUNTIES



April 19th, 2017

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Barnhart, members of the committee,

For the record, I am State Representative Karin Power from House District 41, representing SE Portland, Milwaukie, and Oak Grove. The bottle bill is one of Oregon's greatest environmental achievements, and there have been several hearings this year on aspects of the program and the process of returning recyclable bottles and cans. I am here alongside Representative Smith Warner to discuss HB 3443 amid some larger questions about that process.

In the House Committee on Energy and Environment this session, we heard another bill regarding the convenience of access to the Oregon Beverages Recycling Cooperative's BottleDrop facilities. During that public hearing, I learned during that in some circumstances, OBRC that manages BottleDrop redemption centers requires an individual's drivers license or state ID and address in order to participate in a BottleDrop account. I also learned that the centers are only opened from 9am to 6pm each day, which may not be convenient for those who work multiple day jobs or others with commitments during regular business hours. While that bill did not move forward this session, I have lingering questions about accessibility, equity, and data security and records retention policies of these cooperatives and look forward to continuing to engage in these discussions with stakeholders.

Currently, the OLCC is required to calculate the previous calendar year's percentage of beverage containers returned for each distributor cooperative and each distributor or importer that does not participate in a cooperative by categories in metal, glass, and plastic. When reporting requirements were added to the beverage container return program in 2012, they were limited, and this has resulted in data that requires additional calculations to determine revenue for distributors. Plainly, this means that the public does not know how much money is privately being made off of Oregon's bottle deposit program.

With the changes to the bottle bill over time, consolidation of redemption centers in urban areas has occurred and many are now managed via a cooperative. For the sake of public transparency, the state should require OLCC to report additional data that plainly reveals the amount of money that these entities are receiving from Oregonians' unclaimed bottle deposits.

HB 3443 is a starting point for answering questions about the program, making sure that there are no nickels and dimes related to the program which the public would rather be using for other purposes, and evaluating if the program is using best practices to be accessible and convenient for all to use.

By tightening up reporting requirements we build transparency and accountability. Thank you, colleagues, for working on this.

Sincerely,

Representative Karin Power

