



March 16, 2021

The Honorable Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and the Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) writes to express our support for SB 847, which appoints a Task Force to consider potential updates and system improvements to Oregon's landmark Bottle Bill. Specifically, SB 847 charges a Task Force with examining potential expansion of the Bottle Bill, now celebrating its 50th Anniversary, to include additional beverage container types, in addition to charging the Task Force with taking a general look at Oregon's Bottle Redemption system to ensure that it remains one of the most impactful, consumer-friendly, and cost-effective systems in the world.

As the private-sector stewards of Oregon's Bottle Bill, processing nearly two-billion redeemed and recycled containers each year (representing a redemption rate routinely in the 80-90% range), we are confident that Oregon's system produces better results at lower costs than comparable systems across the nation and the world. As Oregon's first Extended Producer Responsibility system, we are also proud that the Bottle Bill does not require any taxpayer funding to achieve these outstanding outcomes.

Now five-decades since its initial approval, the Bottle Bill has undergone important reforms and expansions along the way, keeping it effective and relevant for Oregonians and protecting Oregon's beaches, roadsides, waterways, and special places from litter and environmental damage. While we know that the Bottle Bill remains effective, and that Oregon's approach delivers some of the best outcomes in the world, we also know that it is useful, from time to time, to bring interested parties together, take a close look at how the system operates, consider ways to process even more materials, and examine ways to leverage efficiencies and improve consumer access.

SB 847 does exactly that, convening industry, environmental, recycling, and consumer interests to look at both expansion of materials and system efficiency, transparency, and access opportunities. Each of these issues carries significant complexity, but the approach detailed in SB 847 should set the Task Force up with the necessary framework to get well-examined and thoughtful analysis and recommendations back to the Legislature.

We thank the bill sponsors, Senators Dembrow and Findley, and Representatives Sollman, Marsh, and Moore-Green, for their bicameral and bipartisan leadership in convening this discussion. To match bill language to intent, we may seek a technical amendment later in the legislative process to moves forward the reporting deadlines to ensure that the Legislature receives a report in time for consideration during the 2022 Short Session, ensures that the scope of the taskforce is focused specifically on beverage containers, and ensures that the Task Force examines a full range of potential incentives and disincentives. We are ready to participate earnestly with the Task Force to supply information, speak to the operations of Oregon's system, and examine potential ways to help continue delivering outstanding outcomes for Oregonians.

Oregon's Bottle Bill remains one of the most important legislative policy achievements in Oregon's history, and is widely popular across the state. A 2019 statewide survey conducted by DHM research showed that 95% of Oregonians are familiar with our redemption system, and 97% continue to think it's a good idea. Delegations from California, Connecticut, Colorado, and many other states and nations routinely travel to Oregon, even in the midst of COVID, to learn how our system achieves such high redemption rates, at such a low cost, with such high public satisfaction. The Legislature should be proud of Oregon's Bottle Bill, and it is wise to examine it from time to time, to ensure that it remains a crowning policy achievement for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E-Chambers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

Eric Chambers, External Relations Director
Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative