

NATIONAL BOTTLE BILL TOOLKIT: A GUIDE FOR STATES

Thank you for your interest in pursuing legislation to create a deposit return system (DRS) for beverage containers which can also be called a “recycling refund” or “bottle bill”. Recycling Refund polls the best with the public, but whatever you want to call it, we want you to have one in your state!

Passing national legislation is difficult, so the way we create pressure for a nationally harmonized system is to pass more bottle bills in states. We can advocate for the introduction and passage of a national bottle bill while concurrently introducing and passing bills in states. We always protect the states who pass laws first from being forced into national programs later, but recommend that nationally there are basic standards for the programs and that if states want to give up running their own, they can, but are not forced to do so.

There are only 10 states that currently have a Recycling Refund, and 40 states that do not. When we compare states with a Recycling Refund system with states that do not have one, the 10 that do have half the amount of roadway litter and 30% less waterway litter, according to the Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study. Furthermore, recycling refunds create jobs and provide a supply of material for companies like [Coca-Cola](#) to meet their sustainability goals, with theirs being 50% recycled content by 2030.



KEY DECISION POINTS

There are a few key decisions that must be made when writing a Recycling Refund law, including:

- 1) What is the material scope? Is milk included? Alcohol? What size of containers are included?
- 2) What will the deposit amount be? We recommend 10 cents but not all states can start there.
- 3) How and where will containers be redeemed and deposits returned?
- 4) Who pays for the system and runs the system - producers or distributors?
- 5) Which agency has the capacity to provide excellent oversight of the program and enforce the goals?

- 6) What are the key performance metrics and do they include source reduction of material, toxics, labeling, refilling, or just recycling rates?
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UNDERSTAND THE LESSONS LEARNED

Recycling Refund laws have been around since 1970. Many mistakes have been made and lessons have been learned, and we want to prevent you from making those same mistakes!

- 1) How will you prevent fraud in the system?
 - 2) What will the convenience standards requirements and recycling rate targets be?
 - 3) How will unredeemed funds be used?
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FIND LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS

Finding an effective political champion will be one of the critical first steps after deciding to pursue a Recycling Refund in your state. Recycling Refunds have been and should have bi-partisan and business support and will create jobs, beautify the state, reduce local government costs to remove litter, and provide businesses with the needed recycled materials supply for metals, glass, and plastic. Recycling Refunds are easy for legislators to like because the public loves them! See our [fact sheet](#) for more statistics, but the data is clear: 75% of the public wants to live in a state with Recycling Refund systems, but only 24% do live in a state with one.



BUILD SUPPORT

- 1) Identify key stakeholders and conduct outreach to garner support and build your team.
- 2) Make sure you have key stakeholders in support from each of these categories: Business, chambers, retailers, waste haulers and curbside recyclers, local governments, environmental protection groups, environmental justice groups, clean water groups, and any other locals that you can find! It's helpful to have people from the general public ready to testify at hearings, so try to gather support from individuals near where state hearings are held so they can lobby, testify, and hold press events in support.
- 3) Download NSAC's [social media toolkit](#) and post to your pages.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [Container Recycling Institute's Bottle Bill Resource Guide](#)
- *Questions?* Email Heidi Sanborn: Heidi@nsaction.us