

## Fun Facts About the Bottle Bill Conservation Corner – April 2017

These days, littering is incredibly taboo, but in the 1960's and 1970's when disposable containers were becoming commonplace, littering was a major issue. To help clean up this problem and encourage recycling, Oregon introduced groundbreaking legislation in the revolutionary Bottle Bill. In April 2017 and January 2018, Oregon's Bottle Bill will be undergoing two significant enhancements to further advance recycling of beverage containers in the state. We have prepared a few FAQ's for you to familiarize yourself with the Bottle Bill and the forthcoming changes.

**What is a Bottle Bill?** In 1971, Oregon cemented itself as an environmental leader with the passing of the first ever Bottle Bill (House Bill 1036). The Oregon Bottle Bill calls for consumers to pay a 5-cent container deposit on many beverage containers including soft drinks, beer and water. People can return the empty containers to stores to receive the 5-cent refund value for each container.

**Why do we need a Bottle Bill?** The initial intent of the Bottle Bill was to combat littering and promote the conservation of resources. Since decreasing litter was the primary focus of the Bill, the initial legislation only included container deposits on beer and soft drinks in aluminum cans, which were the most commonly littered containers. However, during the last 46 years the legislation has undergone several updates including expanding the program to include water, flavored water, and carbonated beverages in any container type including glass and plastic bottles. Additionally, in 2011 the Bottle Bill received two significant updates (HB 3145) that will soon take effect.

**What is the return value of eligible containers?** As of April 1, 2017 all eligible beverage containers in Oregon have a return value of 10-cents per container. No, this isn't an April Fool's joke! An update to the Bottle Bill approved in 2011 (HB 3145) required the Oregon Liquor Control Commission to monitor the return rate of eligible beverage containers. If the rate dropped below 80 percent for two consecutive years, the new legislation called for an increase in the return value from 5-cents to 10-cents per container. This increase took effect on April 1, 2017.

**What type of containers are covered under the Bottle Bill?** Currently, the Bottle Bill applies to all water, flavored water, beer, malt, and carbonated soft drinks. Beginning January 1, 2018 the type of beverage containers covered under the Oregon Bottle Bill will expand to include all beverages except wine, liquor, milk and milk substitutes in bottles or cans. Sorry, your waxy cartons and aseptic containers still cannot be recycled in southern Oregon.

**Where can I redeem my eligible containers?** You can return containers covered under the Bottle Bill to any retail store that sells beverage or to a designated redemption center. Visit [www.BottleDropCenter.com](http://www.BottleDropCenter.com) to find a location near you.

**Do any other states have Bottle Bills?** Yes! Each state's Bottle Bill may differ slightly, but there are currently ten states (plus Guam!) with Bottle Bills including: California, Connecticut, Guam, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont.

**What happens to my cans and bottles if I put them in my curbside recycle bin?** Tossing your cans and bottles (rinsed and without lids, of course) into your curbside recycling bin is certainly better than throwing them away, but you won't get your deposit back on the container. If you aren't interested in returning the containers yourself, consider asking a local school or community organization if they would like to return your containers to raise funds to support their cause. Or, if you finish your beverage

while strolling downtown, keep an eye out for one of several recycling baskets where you can place your container for someone else to claim for redemption.

**What happens to my cans and bottles if I throw them in the trash?** There are several negative consequences of sending aluminum cans and plastic bottles to the landfill. One of the primary issues in landfilling aluminum cans comes with the cost of *replacing* that can with virgin materials, rather than creating new cans from recycled aluminum. The energy required to create a can from virgin materials is staggering. Recycling aluminum cans is far more efficient than sending cans to the landfill, where they can take an estimated 200 years to breakdown! Although the manufacturing process for plastic bottles is less energy-intensive than cans, they too are reported to take 70-450 years (or possibly as many as 1,000 years!) to break down in a landfill. By recycling your cans and bottles, you can save landfill space and conserve resources.