

Oregon Liquor Control Commission

Oregon's Bottle Bill



Oregon's Bottle Bill was introduced in 1971 as the very first bottle bill in the U.S. The bill was created to address a growing litter problem along Oregon beaches, highways and other public areas. Over the years, the Bottle Bill has prompted several other green initiatives.

How It Works

Currently, Oregon retail stores pay the beverage distributor a 10¢ deposit for each container of bottled water, beer, and carbonated soft drink they purchase. Consumers then pay the container deposit to the retailer when they make a purchase. When they're finished, the consumer can return the empty containers to a retail store or redemption center in Oregon to redeem their deposit. Retail stores then return the empty containers to a distributor or distributor cooperative and receive the refund value back for each container.

Deposits on containers not returned for refund are kept by the distributors. Beverage distributors or their contractors who collect containers from stores keep the income from the sale of recyclable material.

Bottle Bill Containers

The beverages currently included in Oregon's Bottle Bill are water and flavored water, beer and other malt beverages, soda water and mineral water, and carbonated soft drinks in container sizes up to and including 3 fluid liters. ORS 459A.702 states that effective January 1, 2018, all beverage containers between 4 ounces and 1.5 liters have a refund value, except distilled liquor, wine, dairy or plant-based milk, meal replacement beverages and infant formula. Water, beer, and carbonated soft drinks in containers of 3 liters or less will continue to have a refund value and most other beverages, including but not limited to tea, coffee, hard cider, fruit juice, kombucha, coconut water, as well as sports and energy drinks will be added.

Redemption Centers and Redemption Limits

The Oregon legislature included laws in the Oregon Bottle Bill that allow for redemption centers and how they will be operated. It has only been in recent years that the OLCC started receiving applications for redemption centers, but there are now numerous redemptions centers around the state. To find a redemption center, go to www.bottledropcenters.com. Redemption centers are open and staffed seven days a week for a minimum of nine hours per day. During open hours, customers have the option of redeeming up to 350 containers using reverse vending machines or up to 50 containers by hand count. Customers may also redeem up to 125 containers through the 24-hour drop-off service. Redemption centers may accept more than 350 containers per day from fundraisers and others by special arrangement.

Each redemption center has one or two convenience zones, which are established areas in close proximity to the redemption center. Large grocery stores that are not within a convenience zone must redeem up to 144 containers per person per day and convenience type stores must redeem up to 50 containers per person per day. The Oregon Legislature has established that a large grocery store within a convenience zone must either participate in the redemption center or must provide equivalent services to the redemption center, including accepting up to 350 containers per person per day. A participating large grocery store within the first convenience zone of a redemption center may refuse to redeem all containers and if it is within the second convenience zone may limit returns to 24 containers per person

per day. Convenience type stores do not have to participate in a redemption center, and if they are within either convenience zone may limit returns to 24 containers per person per day.

OLCC's Role

The Oregon Legislature has given the OLCC authority to administer and enforce the Bottle Bill. The OLCC is dedicated to the success of the Bottle Bill by working with distributors, retailers, redemption centers, and consumers to make sure they are complying with state laws.

Although OLCC oversees the Bottle Bill, the government does not receive any income, taxes or fees for services associated with these laws.

Other state agencies also play a vital role. The Department of Agriculture has the authority to enforce the cleanliness of retailer recycling areas. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is responsible for collecting data associated with solid waste and container return rates. Visit DEQ's Bottle Bill Web site at: www.deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/bottlebill.

Benefits of the Bottle Bill

Reduced Litter - In 1971, litter control was a primary reason for initiating the Bottle Bill. Since then, the percentage of beverage containers among roadside litter has dropped from 40 percent to six percent.

Sustainability - Recycled beverage containers are used to make hundreds of products including produce containers, fleece jackets, decking, carpets, baseball bats, license plates, and insulation, as well as new beverage containers.

Conservation - Recycling a ton of plastic bottles saves approximately 3.8 barrels of oil. Recycling one pound of PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottles saves approximately 12,000 BTUs of energy. In addition, using recycled materials uses two thirds less energy than using raw or virgin materials.

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