

## DRS Policy Should:

- **Require producers to invest in reuse** infrastructure and **incorporate financial incentives** for producers to transition to reusables.
- **Set reuse targets** in statute or regulations, or require producers to propose reuse targets through a stewardship plan.
- **Clearly define “reusable” packaging** as part of an organized return or refill system that does not rely on individual consumer choices to achieve reuse.
- **Center justice & equity** by ensuring community engagement in program implementation, prioritizing the prevention and mitigation of environmental and health impacts from waste management, disposal, and litter in frontline communities, and ensuring equitable access to reuse and recycling.
- **Minimize barriers** to the nascent reuse sector by encouraging competition, correcting outdated and conflicting policies, and avoiding overly burdensome reporting and other administrative requirements on reuse operators.

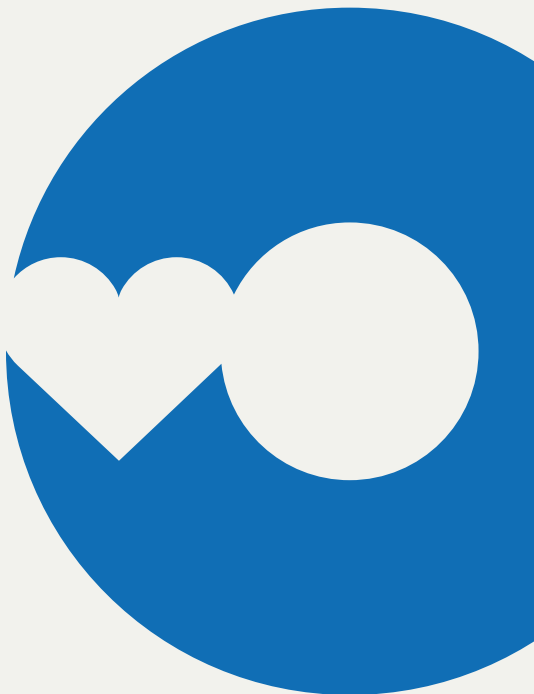
# Deposit Return Systems Accelerate Reuse

Forty years of data on deposit return system (DRS) laws in the U.S. demonstrate that these systems are effective at boosting collection and recycling rates, creating local economic development opportunities and jobs, generating clean streams of recyclable materials through source-separation, preventing roadside litter and plastic pollution, and catalyzing reuse. **It’s time for a national DRS.**

**The beverage sector is ready for reuse:** Today, more beverage reuse/refill systems operate at scale than all other open reuse systems (such as reuse for take-out/delivery or bulk sales of dry goods), and virtually all of them use DRSs to get their containers back. In every successful refillable beverage initiative around the world, DRS are either mandated by law or established voluntarily by the beverage industry.

**DRS started as a reuse/refill solution:** The original DRS systems for beverages were created by beer, soda and dairy companies to get their bottles back for washing and refilling. The distribution and wash hubs they built allowed virtually all commercial beverages in the U.S. to be sold in refillable bottles.

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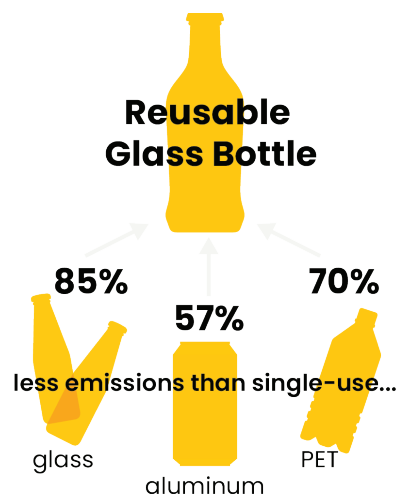


Around the world, beverage companies have continued to operate and expand their refillables lines:

- In Germany, 82% of beer is sold in refillable bottles, and 99% are returned for refilling. Overall, 54% of beverages sold in Germany are in refillables.
- In Ontario, Canada, 85% of beer is sold in refillable bottles, with 97% returned and an average reuse rate of 15 cycles.
- Refillables account for significant portions of beverage sales in Mexico (27%), Columbia (54%), Brazil (24%), China (22%), Vietnam (31%), Thailand (20%), India (34%), Nigeria (43%), and the Philippines (59%).

Refillable bottles are typically either made from glass or PET plastic (#1). Aluminum packaging manufacturers are also beginning to make refillable bottles, although this is currently a very small share of the market. Glass bottles can be reused up to 50 times and PET bottles can be reused up to 20 times before they are retired and recycled.

**Reusable beverage containers are better for the environment:** After a third use, reusable glass bottles are already less impactful than single-use glass, PET or aluminum cans. Used 25 times and then recycled, reusable glass bottles create 85% fewer climate emissions than single-use glass; 57% fewer than aluminum cans; and 70% fewer than single-use PET. Refillable PET bottles can save up to 40% of the raw materials and 50% of the greenhouse gas emissions compared to the production of single-use PET bottles. Refillables also benefit the ocean: **Oceana estimates that a 10% increase in the share of beverages sold in refillables could result in a 22% decrease in marine plastic pollution.** This would keep 4.5 to 7.6 billion plastic bottles out of the ocean each year.



For reuse and refill to work at scale, we'll need financial incentives to ensure that consumers return reusable packaging. DRS establishes the necessary incentives through refundable deposits that help signal to consumers to bring their bottles back. By assigning economic value to containers, DRS is also proven to prevent litter.

## About Upstream

Upstream is a national non-profit organization that sparks innovative solutions to plastic pollution by helping people, businesses, and communities shift from single-use to reuse. We seek to live in a world where people and the planet are treated as indisposable and communities thrive without all the waste. **We believe deposit return systems (DRSs) are crucial to accelerating the new reuse economy.**

Upstream's vision is for 30% of consumer goods to be sold in reusables by 2030. To realize this vision, we need consumer brands to have real skin in the game when it comes to designing, packaging, and selling their products. **A national DRS will put the responsibility for redesigning, reusing, and recycling beverage containers where it belongs—on beverage producers, who already support this legislation.**

*For more information, contact Sydney Harris at [sydney@upstreamolutions.org](mailto:sydney@upstreamolutions.org).*