



# COMPREHENSIVE HIGH PERFORMANCE RECYCLING IS THE ANSWER FOR RHODE ISLAND

## WHAT IS EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)?

EPR is an environmental policy approach where producers (typically the brand owner of the sold item) are held responsible for the management of the entire lifecycle of their products, including recycling. This approach helps reduce litter and waste, while encouraging the design of more sustainable products that are easier to recycle and reuse. Under EPR, homeowners and business owners will continue to have regular access to recycling, mainly through curbside recycling, but the cost of collection, transportation, processing, and education will shift from municipalities to private-sector producers.

## WHAT IS A BOTTLE BILL?

A Bottle Bill - also known as a Recycling Refund program or Deposit Return System - places a refundable deposit that consumers pay at the time of purchase on beverage containers, such as glass or plastic bottles and aluminum cans, to incentivize their return for recycling or reuse. Once the beverages are consumed, consumers return the containers to a designated collection point (such as a bag-drop, drop-off center, or reverse vending machine) and their deposit is refunded. The collected containers are then recycled or reused.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF EPR?

- 1 Increases Recycling Rates:** Producers are accountable for a recycling system that meets certain collection and recycling rates for the packaging and paper products put into the marketplace, encouraging better product design, greater access to recycling, and more education and outreach.
- 2 Enables Cost Savings for Local Governments:** Rather than local government and taxpayers, producers would fund the collection and recycling of their packaging and paper products.
- 3 Encourages Sustainable Product Design:** EPR incentivizes brands to use packaging that is recyclable and easier to recycle, reducing the environmental impact of production and waste.
- 4 Promotes a Circular Economy:** EPR helps shift toward a circular economy, where materials are kept in productive use through recycling and reuse instead of ending up in landfills or waterways.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A BOTTLE BILL?

- 1 Reduces Litter:** These systems significantly reduce the amount of littered beverage containers by incentivizing consumers to return them for a monetary refund. This is particularly important to capture the one-third of beverage containers consumed on-the-go.
- 2 Increases Recycling Rates:** Bottle Bill systems have a proven track record of boosting recycling rates with modern systems frequently achieving redemption rates above 90 percent. For example, Oregon's Bottle Bill program consistently has an 80-90% redemption rate for beverage containers.

- 3 Reduces Environmental Impact:** By recycling and reusing beverage containers, these systems help reduce the need for virgin materials and the carbon emissions associated with manufacturing new containers.
- 4 Creates Cleaner Communities:** The Bottle Bill system helps keep public spaces, parks, rivers, roadsides, and streams clean by preventing containers from being discarded improperly and avoids the need to spend as much taxpayer dollars on litter clean-ups.

## HOW DO EPR AND A BOTTLE BILL PROGRAM WORK TOGETHER?

When designed and implemented together, EPR and Bottle Bill systems create a high performance recycling system. EPR ensures that producers are responsible for the lifecycle of their products and catalyzes more sustainable packaging design, while a Bottle Bill program encourages consumers to return their beverage containers for recycling and reuse and significantly increases recycling rates. This combination leads to higher recycling rates, reduced litter, and a more sustainable approach to manufacturing and waste management, while removing the recycling burden from municipal governments.

## DOES EPR IMPACT BUSINESSES?

Only businesses that are “producers” have to directly fund the producer responsibility organizations managing the EPR and bottle bill programs. For most products, the producer is the brand, but it can also include others such as distributors and importers where there is no brand owner. While this may involve additional costs for these producers, the cost is often a fraction of a penny per package. Importantly, implementing these programs delivers many benefits to the producers directly paying for such programs including stimulating innovation in packaging design, reduced environmental impact of operations that can be used to make progress on sustainability goals or in marketing to consumers, and less concern about lawsuits or criticism about packaging in the environment from the sale of their goods.

## ARE THERE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTTLE BILL SYSTEMS FOR CONSUMERS?

Consumers pay a minimal 10 cent deposit on beverage containers at the time of purchase. This deposit is fully refunded when they return the container. This program incentivizes recycling and reduces the overall environmental impact of beverage containers. The system will be designed to ensure that consumers have a convenient way to return their containers for a refund.

## WHAT PRODUCTS ARE COVERED UNDER COMBINED EPR AND BOTTLE BILL SYSTEMS?

EPR can apply to a wide range of packaging and paper products, whether or not they are recyclable. Bottle Bill systems apply to beverage containers such as glass and plastic bottles and aluminum cans. These containers are common sources of litter and are under-recycled.

## HOW SUCCESSFUL ARE BOTTLE BILL PROGRAMS?

These programs have been implemented successfully in the United States (10 states already have these programs) and around the world. The beverage containers in the bottle bill programs of these 10 states are consistently higher than beverage containers not sold with a refund value. The success of bottle bill programs is why they are rapidly spreading around the world. In 2016, 38 jurisdictions (280 million people) lived where there was an operational bottle bill program. It's projected that by the end of 2027, more than 70 jurisdictions, covering approximately 641 million people, will have an operational bottle bill.