CHPR | COALITION FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE RECYCLING

HIGH PERFORMANCE RECYCLING

A PATH TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

A recent report explores the critical role of High-Performance Recycling Policies (HPRP) in advancing circularity and sustainability within the beverage container industry.

The research highlights the challenges within current recycling and waste management systems and evaluates how integrating Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) with Recycling Refunds (RR) — also known as Deposit Return Systems (DRS) or "Bottle Bills" into an overall HPRR — can unlock substantial economic and environmental benefits.

This analysis is essential for guiding businesses, policymakers, and other stakeholders toward effective strategies to boost recycling rates, meet recycled content goals, and foster a more resilient and sustainable economy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States loses $5.1 billion annually in recyclable beverage containers. HPRP, which combine the benefits, efficiencies and strengths of EPR and RR systems, provide a cost-effective and proven solution to drive higher capture rates – up to 95% – boost recycled content, and deliver significant economic and environmental benefits.

THE CHALLENGE

Current recycling systems – developed 30-50 years ago – are insufficient for meeting today's challenges, hindering circularity and making it difficult for companies and governments to meet recycled content commitments and goals.

Key challenges include:

- **Supply Shortages:** A lack of recycled materials to meet growing demand.
- **Economic Barriers:** Virgin material extraction is often cheaper than recycling.
- **Material Issues:** Unique recycling challenges for aluminum, glass, and PET.

MATERIAL	CURRENT RECYCLING RATE	2030 INDUSTRY TARGET RECYCLING RATE	HPRP ACHIEVABLE RATES
Aluminum	~45%	70%	95%
Glass	~31%	50%	95%
Pet	~29%	50%	95%

THE SOLUTION

HPRP, which combines EPR and RR systems, addresses key challenges and delivers significant benefits:

- **Higher Returns:** EPR expands and enhances access while RR incentivizes consumer convenience and returns, maximizing overall collection rates.
- **Accelerated Progress:** RR programs produce rapid results in 2 to 3 years while EPR builds infrastructure capacity over the longer term.
- **Improved Material Quality:** RR programs reduce contamination, yielding high-quality and quantity recyclables ideal for closed-loop systems that support bottle-to-bottle and can-to-can manufacturing.
- **Emissions Reduction:** Increased recycling leads to significant reductions in carbon emissions, contributing to decarbonization efforts.
- **Stronger Domestic Manufacturing:** Integrated systems foster regional markets, reduce reliance on fraught global supply chains, create jobs, and strengthen local economies.
- **Enhanced Infrastructure:** EPR investments improve collection, sorting, and processing efficiency, modernizing recycling systems.
- **Material Circularity:** Efficient recycling systems enable more effective reuse and minimize waste, supporting circularity.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Synergies between EPR and RR reduce recovery costs while achieving rapid results and long-term optimization.
- **Enhanced Equity:** The system promotes reduced litter, equitable access, community economic development, and an improved quality of life.

CALL TO ACTION

Beverage and consumer-packaged goods brands, distributors, and producers should collaborate with legislators and stakeholders to implement HPRP.

Key steps include:

- **Enacting Supportive Legislation:** Create a legislative framework for EPR and RR programs.
- **Investing in Infrastructure:** Fund collection, processing, and market development.
- **Promoting Consumer Education:** Raise awareness and drive consumer engagement and participation.

HPRP offers a comprehensive solution to modernize recycling systems, achieve sustainability goals, and drive economic growth and opportunity. By embracing this cost-effective, efficient, and proven approach, we can foster a circular economy and promote a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable world.