

# EXPANDING NEW YORK'S BOTTLE BILL – COSTLY, COUNTERPRODUCTIVE



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New York's bottle bill law was enacted more than 35 years ago. The law requires stores to charge customers an extra 5¢ on beer, soda, and water containers. The bottle bill was enacted before the widespread use of curbside recycling, which allows people to recycle more easily from home. When compared to modern systems, the bottle bill is outdated, costly and cumbersome. Instead of expanding an antiquated system to cover even more beverages like teas, juices, and sports drinks, we should invest in modernizing New York's recycling infrastructure to improve recycling rates.



## A New \$74 Million Tax on Consumers

- Expansion of the current deposit system would add more than \$50 million to the net operating costs (after deducting scrap value) of New York redemption centers, retailers and distributors. These are all local, New York state businesses and many of them are very small.
- In addition, consumers who do not redeem their containers at redemption centers would pay a de facto tax of \$24 million in unclaimed deposits.
- Consumers already pay for recycling services at their homes. Those who continue to recycle at home for the convenience will be paying an additional tax on their containers. The burden of this tax falls disproportionately on consumers who live in urban areas, where they lack the space to bundle bottles and cans and the transportation options to return them.



## Expansion Would be an Enormous Burden for Grocers

- Most redemptions go through reverse vending machines in New York supermarkets, but roughly half of the juice, tea, and sports drink containers that would be affected could not be accepted in these machines today, either because of the material they are made from or the shape or size of the bottle.
- Retailers would have to redeem many of these containers manually, requiring more staff, more space, and growing the lines at customer service counters.



## It Won't Improve Recycling Rates

- The environmental benefit of shifting these containers to the deposit system would be very small because many of these containers are already being recycled at home.
- The impact of expansion on New York's recycling rate would be nearly immeasurable – in the hundredths of a percent. The minuscule return wouldn't outweigh the burdensome costs.
- Instead of nickeling and diming consumers, we should work together to make recycling easier and better by funding and adopting the latest and best practices for our local recycling programs.



## These Containers Are Already Being Recycled – And They Benefit Recyclers

- The nonalcoholic beverage containers affected are overwhelmingly PET plastic – a valuable commodity for local recyclers. Recyclers sell these materials to offset the cost of recycling to residents and businesses. Removing these containers from curbside carts would take away one of the most valuable assets in the recycling stream.
- At a time when recycling programs everywhere are struggling to remain viable, taking away a valuable part of their recyclables would make it more difficult for cities and towns to fund local recycling.