



## NEWS RELEASE

### For immediate release:

Friday, February 20, 2026

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### **OVER 300 BUSINESS, CIVIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND YOUTH GROUPS CALL ON STATE LEGISLATIVE LEADERS AND LAWMAKERS TO MODERNIZE THE STATE'S RETURNABLE CONTAINER LAW ("BOTTLE BILL")**

### **GROUPS URGE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO INCREASE CURRENT REDEEMED BEVERAGE CONTAINER "HANDLING FEE" TO RESPOND TO REDEMPTION CENTERS THAT HAVE GONE OUT OF BUSINESS DUE TO ALBANY'S INACTION**

### **GROUPS RELEASE POLICY PAPER SHOWING THAT MODERNIZATION COULD GENERATE FOR THE STATE AS MUCH AS \$100 MILLION IN ITS FIRST YEAR AND SAVE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MORE THAN \$100 MILLION ANNUALLY**

(Albany, N.Y.) A broad coalition of over 300 groups today called on New York lawmakers to include modernization of the state returnable container law (aka "The Bottle Bill") in the final budget plan due by April 1. The groups say it makes sense for the bill to be in the budget since it would both increase revenue for the state and track one of the recommendations of the now two-year-old "Solid Waste Management Plan."

The groups released a policy paper that predicted that the state stands to bring in up to \$100 million in additional revenues if New York acts on the bill, in a year when the state is facing multi-billion-dollar deficits. Modernization would also save local taxpayers as much as \$108 million annually. In addition, the groups highlighted the way the system supports small businesses, low-income New Yorkers, and marginalized bottle and can collectors, emphasizing the need for immediate action to save "redemption centers" across the state – businesses that handle much of the redeemed deposits

## Groups Urge State Lawmakers To Include Modernization Of Bottle Bill In The Final Budget, Page 2

– because due to a too-low handling fee on redeemed beverage containers, redemption centers have been forced to close in recent years, hampering the system’s efficacy.

The groups also cited the December 2023 release by the Department of Environmental Conservation of its new ten-year solid waste plan, “[New York State Solid Waste Management Plan: Building The Circular Economy Through Sustainable Materials Management](#),” which recommends supporting proposals such as:

- Modernization and expansion of the Bottle Bill (Returnable Container Act);
- Increased handling fees; and
- Development of an interagency Bottle Bill task force that will reduce fraudulent sales and redemption activities in violation of the Returnable Container Act and other state laws.

The groups called for the FY2027 executive budget to include measures that track [Senate bill S.5684 and Assembly bill A.6543](#), which would:

- Expand the beverage containers covered under the law to include containers for sports drinks, non-carbonated drinks, wine, and spirits;
- Raise the deposit fee to a dime (it has been a nickel since 1983); and
- Raise the handling fee for those who handle redeemed beverage containers (it has been stagnant at \$0.035 since 2009).

The groups also urged that the state implement a 2009 law which was supposed to establish a grant program to help redemption centers and increase the use of technologies to make it easier for the public to redeem covered beverage containers.

###

Letter to State Lawmakers Is Attached  
Policy Paper Is Attached

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE URGING INCLUSION OF THE  
“BIGGER BETTER BOTTLE BILL” IN THE BUDGET**

February 19, 2026

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader  
New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, N.Y. 12247

Assemblymember Carl Heastie  
Speaker  
New York State Assembly  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, N.Y. 12248

Senator Robert Ort  
Minority Leader  
New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, N.Y. 12247

Assemblymember Ed Ra  
Minority Leader  
New York State Assembly  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, N.Y. 12248

**Re: Support Modernizing New York’s Returnable Container Act (“Bottle Bill”) as Part of Your Executive Budget or as a Program Priority, Which Would Increase Redemption Rates, Reduce Litter, Help Reduce Solid Wastes, and Protect Jobs & Businesses**

Dear Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Senate Minority Leader Ort, and Assembly Minority Leader Ra:

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong support to modernize New York’s Returnable Container Act, commonly known as the ‘Bottle Bill.’ It’s time to update the law to increase the deposit value and include popular non-carbonated beverages, wine, spirits, hard cider, and other beverage containers. Increasing the deposit value will increase the redemption right, and including more beverages in the Bottle Bill deposit program will result in billions of bottles being diverted from landfills and incinerators. An expanded Bottle Bill will further reduce pollution, especially plastic pollution, all while lifting up workers in the recycling and redemption industry.

Moreover, in a year in which the state is facing a significant budget deficit, modernizing the Bottle Bill could generate as much as *\$100 million* and save local governments money by reducing costs for trash disposal and litter clean up.

*There are four important steps needed to modernize the law:*

**Expand the type of covered beverage containers.** Modernization expands the types and number of beverage containers covered by the Bottle Bill. Other states from Maine to California include a diverse range of non-carbonated beverages, wine, and liquor with great success. Any modernization plan appropriately exempts all dairy, dairy-like, and 100% vegetable and fruit juice containers.

**Increase the amount of the deposit to a dime.** The impact of the nickel deposit approved in 1982 has eroded over time. A mere inflation update would likely make that deposit nearly *fifteen cents*. This change could increase the redemption rate from 64% to 90%. To ensure that those who wish to redeem their deposits can easily do so, we need a portion of the additional revenues collected by the state to be used to ensure better compliance and enhance access to redemption entities. Oregon has already increased deposits on beverage containers to 10 cents, leading to an immediate

increase in recycling redemption rates. An additional benefit is that an increased deposit (plus an expansion to new containers) will help "canners," those hard-working individuals who collect redeemable containers that are discarded by the original consumer.

**Increase the "handling fee," which has not been increased in over 15 years.** The "handling fee" is the funding stream for redemption centers, entities that exist to make it easier for consumers to redeem containers as well as helping the state's redemption rate. As you know, the costs of running a business have significantly increased over the past 15 years, but the funding for redemption centers has not. As a result, over 150 centers have had to close, thus undermining the program, reducing consumer convenience, and costing the state jobs. We urge that you include a phase-in increase in the fee as part of your budget.

Modernization has other benefits as well. Materials returned in a deposit system are recycled significantly more than when placed in curbside bins. The recovery rates for glass containers under deposit are 2-3 times the rate as they are recycled in curbside programs. The quality of material is significantly better, without contamination, such that the glass from the bottle deposit program is virtually all returned to glass container manufacturing plants in New York and neighboring states in the region.

The above provisions, plus other important reforms, are included in S.5684/A.6543. We support that bill and urge you to include it as part of your executive budget or embrace it as a program proposal. As you know, modernization of the law was included as part of the DEC's "New York State Solid Waste Management Plan: Building the Circular Economy Through Sustainable Materials Management (2023 - 2032)."

We urge your support for this important environmental and economic justice initiative. Including the Bigger, Better Bottle Bill in your FY 2026-2027 Executive Budget or as a program proposal will bolster the state's efforts to reduce litter, enhance recycling, create jobs, lift up canners in disadvantaged communities, expand equity, and ease consumer participation.

Thank you for considering our request, and we look forward to working with you to ensure a cleaner environment.

Sincerely,

350Brooklyn

350NYC

5 Cent Bottle Return LLC

A&A Redemption Center, Inc

AAJA

ACES Aurorans for Climate and  
Environmental Sense

Adirondack Voters for Change

AGA REDEMPTION LLC

Albany Presbytery Peacemaking Task Force

Albany Progressive Action Network

Albany UU Green Sanctuary Team

Albion Redemption Center

All Our Energy

Allegany Beverage and Redemption

Alliance for a Green Economy

Amir holdings Inc.

AQS REDEMPTION Inc.

ARC Redemption Inc.

Auburn Bottle Return

Aytzim: Ecological Judaism

Bag O' Nickels Redemption

BC Sustainability Club (Brooklyn College)

Best Buds @ SU

Beyond Plastics

Beyond Plastics Brooklyn

Beyond Plastics Queens

Beyond Plastics Schenectady

Beyond Plastics Sullivan County NY  
 Big Reuse  
 Bottle Bills  
 BOTTLE DEPOT  
 Bottle Depot  
 Bottle World Inc.  
 Bottles For The Brave  
 Brooklyn College Dream Team  
 BSA Pack 4076  
 BSA Troop 4085  
 Buffalo Nickel Redemption  
 Buffalo Pug and Small Breed Rescue Inc  
 Buffalos Best Bottles  
 Burroughs Audubon Nature Club  
 Buy Local, Grow Local  
 CAMDEN CANS & BOTTLE RETURN  
 Camden Cans & Bottle Returns  
 Campaign for Renewable Energy  
 Can Stop Redemption Center and Groceries,  
 Inc.  
 Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care  
 Coalition (CRICCC)  
 Cash For Cans Express Corp  
 Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga  
 Caz Cans LLC  
 Center for Independence of the Disabled,  
 New York (CIDNY)  
 Center for Justice & Democracy  
 Center for Urban Environmental Reform  
 Center for Zero Waste Design  
 Church of St. Francis Xavier in Manhattan  
 Church Women United in New York State  
 Citizens Concerned About Plastic Pollution  
 City Tech Pride Club  
 Clean Air Action Network of Glens Falls  
 Clean Air Coalition of Western New York  
 Clean Bushwick Initiative  
 CLYNK  
 CNY Redemption  
 Coalition for Outreach, Policy & Education  
 (COPE)  
 Coins to dollars redemption center  
 ColorBrightonGreen  
 Columbia County Reduces Waste--Bring Your  
 Own (CCRW--BYO)  
 Community Advocates for a Sustainable  
 Environment  
 Community Beverage

Compost International  
 Corbitt's Corner  
 Corey Union- Cortland (SUNY Cortland)  
 Creating Change Redemption Center  
 criminal justice club (BMCC)  
 D & p recycle inc.  
 D.C Redemption  
 Data Science Club (City Tech)  
 Deep Green Resistance New York City  
 Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona  
 University  
 Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society  
 Delta Phi Omega Sorority, Inc. (Syracuse  
 University)  
 Democrats at Syracuse University  
 Don't Trash the Catskills  
 Duanesburg Redemption Bottle & Can Return  
 Earth & Me  
 Ecojustice Collaborative  
 Education Club (SUNY Cortland)  
 Elmirans & Friends Against Fracking  
 Elmsford Conservation Advisory Council  
 Engineering for a Sustainable Society (SUNY  
 ESF)  
 Environment Ministry of the Church of St.  
 Francis Xavier in Manhattan  
 Environmental Action Coalition  
 Environmental Advocates NY  
 Environmental Alliance (SUNY New Paltz)  
 Environmental Studies Student Organization  
 (SUNY ESF)  
 Exchange Redemption Inc  
 Express bottle return  
 Federated Conservationists of Westchester  
 County  
 First Year Connection (Bronx Community  
 College)  
 Five Cents Fast  
 For the Many  
 For Your Convenience  
 Fridays for Future Capital District NY  
 Friendly Game Community (Queens College)  
 Friends of MSF (Brooklyn College)  
 Frye Road Redemption Center  
 Fultonville Redemption Center  
 Future Teachers Of Color (SUNY New Paltz)  
 Glass Packaging Institute  
 Gliding Stars Inc

Gorilla Corps (SUNY Cortland)  
 Grassroots Environmental Education  
 Grassroots Gardens WNY  
 Greece Baptist Sustainability Team  
 Green Bottle Redemption Center  
 Green Education and Legal Fund  
 GREEN LEGACY EXPRESS INC  
 Green Map System  
 Green Spaces Club (City Tech)  
 Green World 168 LLC  
 GreeningUSA  
 GreenLatinos  
 Greenway Bottle and Can  
 Groundwork Hudson Valley  
 GSEU (SUNY ESF)  
 Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association  
 Hilltop Redemption  
 Hudson River Sloop Clearwater  
 Impact 100 NYC  
 Indivisible New Rochelle  
 Indivisible Scarsdale  
 JK Peris, Inc.  
 Justice is Global (SUNY New Paltz)  
 K-Pop at QC (Queens College)  
 Keep Rockland Beautiful  
 Kesem at Syracuse University  
 Lakeshore Bottle & Can Return Center  
 Lampros Solar  
 Law and Politics Club (SUNY Cortland)  
 League of Women Voters  
 League of Women Voters of Cortland County  
 League of Women Voters of New York State  
 LGBTQ+ (CCNY)  
 Liberty Beer Depot Inc.  
 Livonia Redemption Center  
 Long Island Bottles and Cans  
 Long Island Bottles and Cans Inc  
 Lowville redemption center  
 Mammoth Recycling  
 MAPS (Minority Association of Prehealth  
 Students) Brooklyn College  
 Marihana Heloany Reis  
 Marine Biology Society (College of Staten  
 Island)  
 MASA  
 Mechatronics Club (City Tech)  
 Mega Beverage Redemption Center Inc

Middle Eastern and North African Student  
 Association of Hunter College  
 Midstate Recycling LLC  
 Mohawk Redemption  
 MOSAIC  
 Mothers Out Front Dutchess Count  
 Mothers Out Front Tompkins  
 Mycology Club (Pratt Institute)  
 NAACP (SUNY Cortland)  
 Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club  
 Neighborhood redemption center  
 New Paltz Human Services Club (SUNY New  
 Paltz)  
 New Paltz Outing Club (SUNY New Paltz)  
 New York Climate Action Group  
 New York Communities for Change (NYCC)  
 New York Progressive Action Network  
 New York Public Interest Research Group  
 New York State PTA  
 New Yorkers for Clean Power  
 Nickel and Dime Redemption Center  
 Nickel City Bottle and Can Redemption  
 Center  
 Nickelback Bottle and Can Return  
 Nikko Gambino  
 North American Climate, Conservation and  
 Environment (NACCE)  
 North Country Earth Action  
 North Shore Audubon Society  
 NYCD16 Indivisible  
 NYCD16/15 Indivisible  
 NYenvironcom  
 Oakie's Green Team (SUNY ESF)  
 Olivia Dombek  
 Onondaga Audubon  
 Operation SPLASH  
 Orange RAP  
 Orangutan Outreach  
 Park Slope Neighbors  
 PAUSE (People of Albany United for Safe  
 Energy) / 350Albany  
 People for a Healthy Environment  
 Peoples Climate Movement - NY  
 Pokemon Club (Queens College)  
 Poli Sci Club (SUNY Purchase)  
 Political Science and International Relations  
 Association (SUNY New Paltz)  
 Political Science Club (Brooklyn College)

Pratt Institute Bee Club  
 Pre-Law Society (SUNY New Paltz)  
 Protect the Adirondacks! Inc.  
 Psychology Association ( SUNY New Paltz)  
 Putnam Progressives  
 QC Outdoors Club (Queens College)  
 QC Vox (Queens College)  
 Qomunidad  
 Queens College Political Science Club  
 Quick & Easy Bottle & Can Return  
 Quick & Easy Bottle Return  
 Quick Stop beverage and grocery  
 Rabideau Redemption  
 RAFT (Residents Allied for the Future of Tioga)  
 REDEEMER BOTTLE AND CAN RETURN  
 CENTER  
 Redemption Hub  
 Reloop Platform  
 Residents Allied for the Future of Tioga (RAFT)  
 Righis Redemption centers llc  
 RISE (Rockaway Initiative for Sustainability  
 and Equity)  
 Rivers & Mountains GreenFaith Circle  
 RLS Management Solutions LLC  
 Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action  
 (RAICA)  
 Roctricity LLC  
 Roseadon Enterprises, Inc.  
 RPG Club (SUNY Cortland)  
 RWW (Pratt Institute)  
 Safe Energy Rights Group  
 SAPHE  
 Saratoga Friends Meeting  
 Save the Pine Bush  
 Save the Sound  
 SDIPN! (Shut Down Indian Pt. NOW!)  
 Seatuck Environmental Association  
 SEEKERS Christian Fellowship (City Tech)  
 Seneca Lake Guardian  
 Shelly's redemption center  
 Shoulette's Redemption Depot  
 Shut Down Indian Point NOW!  
 Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
 Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York  
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester  
 Skidmore College Environmental Action Club  
 Smitty's enterprises Inc.  
 Solarize Albany

Solidarity Committee of the Capital District  
 South Beach Civic Association  
 South Shore Audubon Society  
 St. Francis Xavier Church in Manhattan  
 Story of Stuff  
 Story of Stuff Project  
 Student Art Alliance (SUNY New Paltz)  
 Student Government Association (City Tech)  
 SUNY College of Environmental Science and  
 Forestry  
 SUNY New Paltz Environmental Task Force  
 SUNY New Paltz Young Democratic Socialists  
 of America  
 Superior Redemption  
 Sure We Can  
 Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island  
 Chapter  
 Surfrider Foundation New York City  
 Sustainable Putnam  
 Sustainable Rentals LLC  
 Sustainable Warwick  
 Syracuse Cultural Workers  
 Take Back The Night (SUNY New Paltz)  
 Ten Lives Club  
 The Banner Newspaper (College of Staten  
 Island)  
 The Environmental Recycling of NY  
 The Exchange (Brooklyn College)  
 The Fireflies: WIF (Brooklyn College)  
 The Marketing Club (BMCC)  
 The Park Church  
 The Story of Stuff  
 The Wildlife Society at SUNY ESF  
 Third Act Rochester  
 Third Act Upstate New York  
 THRIVE (The Healing Resource Institute for  
 Victim Empowerment)  
 TIAA-Divest!  
 TIAA-Divest! from climate destruction  
 Tim Malpo  
 Tompkins County Climate Protection  
 Initiative  
 Toxic Tech (City Tech)  
 TREEage (Brooklyn College)  
 Two-Can Dan's Redemption Center  
 United AI (Syracuse University)  
 United Climate Action Network (UCAN)  
 United for Action

United Jewish Federation of Northeast New  
York  
United Muslim Alliance of Albany  
United University Professions (UUP)  
Upper Green Side  
Upper Nyack Green Committee  
Upper West Side Recycling  
Ursula Schwerin Library (City Tech)  
UU Congregation of Binghamton, Green  
Sanctuary  
Valcour Bottle redemption center  
Vetrone's Redemption Center  
W.I.S.E  
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.  
Westchester Alliance for Sustainable  
Solutions (WASS)  
Women's History Month Committee  
(Brooklyn College)  
Zero Waste Capital District  
Zero Waste Columbia  
Zero Waste Ithaca  
Zero Waste Warren County



# Bottle Bill 40 Campaign

February, 2026

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## Policy Close Up

**Fiscal Benefits to New  
York State and Its  
Localities With  
Modernization of Bottle  
Bill**

**Summary:** Four decades ago, New York State adopted the New York State Returnable Container Law (“the Law”), popularly known as the “Bottle Bill.” Over those years, the Law has been expanded and changed, but its core features are the same: for containers covered by the law, consumers pay a 5-cent deposit and can redeem that nickel upon return of the container. After four decades, what is clear is that New York must modernize this effective program for the next 40 years, end beverage container litter and waste, and help grow New York’s “circular economy.”<sup>1</sup>

**This analysis reviews the fiscal benefits to the state: namely an increase in revenues that could reach \$100 million in the first year as well as benefits to local governments that could exceed \$100 million annually in savings.** Moreover, modernization would help increase recycling and thus work toward attacking the state’s mounting solid waste crisis.

### **Background:**

The Legislature made its intent clear in its findings in support of the Bottle Deposit Law. In its findings, the legislation stated unequivocally:

*“requiring a deposit on all beverage containers, along with certain other facilitating measures, will provide a necessary incentive for the economically efficient and environmentally benign collection and recycling of such containers.”<sup>2</sup>*

Our review of the track record of the Bottle Deposit Law finds that it has succeeded in meeting the goal of the legislation. **The Law has helped reduce litter and it has taken solid waste that would have otherwise ended up in landfills or incinerators and instead diverted those resources into recycling programs.**

Moreover, in a way not contemplated by the original sponsors, the Law has helped establish funding streams – through the collection of unreclaimed deposits – that bolster other important environmental programs.

Of course, that is not to say that the Law is beyond improvements. The 5-cent deposit established in 1982 has not been adjusted. **Had it been merely adjusted for inflation; the deposit would be nearly 15 cents today.** And, while the Law has been expanded to include water bottles and wine coolers since it was originally passed, many more products fall outside its scope.

**Lastly, in some areas, there is growing inadequate availability of facilities where consumers can go to redeem their deposits, also known as redemption centers.**

## Background: New York’s Current Bottle Bill

Enacted in 1982, the New York State Returnable Container Act,<sup>3</sup> commonly known as “the Bottle Bill,” requires a 5-cent refundable deposit to be placed on eligible beverage containers. Upon passage the Bottle Law covered only beer and soda sold in New York. The Law requires retailers who sell covered beverages to accept returns of empty containers for the products they sell and refund the deposits. The Law also requires beverage distributors to compensate retailers for the cost of collecting and recycling empty containers by paying them a small handling fee per container. For consumers, the impact on common beverages is as follows:<sup>4</sup>

Beverages currently covered by the Bottle Law	Beverages <i>not</i> covered
Carbonated Soft Drinks	Milk Products
Sparkling Water	Wine and Liquors
Carbonated Energy Drinks	Hard Ciders
Carbonated Juice (anything less than 100% juice, containing added sugar or water)	Non-Carbonated Tea
Carbonated Tea	Non-Carbonated Sports Drinks
Soda Water	Non-Carbonated Juice
Beer and Other Malt Beverages	Non-Carbonated Energy Drinks
Mineral Water - Both carbonated and non-carbonated mineral water	Beverages in Drink Boxes or Pouches
Wine <i>Products</i> (such as wine coolers)	Waters that do contain sugar
Water which does not contain sugar, including flavored or nutritionally enhanced water	

Retailers who sell beverages covered by the Law must perform *three* actions.

- *First*, retailers must pay the deposit value (5-cents) for each container purchased from the Deposit Initiator.<sup>5</sup>
- *Second*, retailers must collect from the consumer the deposit value for each container purchased.
- *Third*, retailers are required to accept eligible containers for return/redemption and refund to the consumer the deposit value for returned/redeemed containers. (Retailers are only required to accept for redemption the brands, varieties, and sizes of deposit containers that they offer for sale.<sup>6</sup>)

For deposits that are not redeemed, New York State controls those nickels and then allocates 80% of those unredeemed deposits to the state general fund and environmental protection fund, while the remaining 20% is retained by distributors.<sup>7</sup>

After its 40-year-plus history, New York’s Bottle Bill has been the state’s most effective recycling and litter prevention program.<sup>8</sup> In 2024, New York’s redemption rate was at 68%.<sup>9</sup> According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the bottle bill reduces roadside container litter by 70%, and in 2020, 5.5 billion containers were recycled.<sup>10</sup>

## Modernizing the Bottle Bill

Assemblymember Deborah Glick and Senator Rachel May introduced a Bigger Better Bottle Bill (A.6543 and S.5684, respectively). The Bottle Bill was last expanded more than ten years ago. After over four decades of success, there are three important steps needed to modernize the law:

**Expand the Bottle Bill to include wine, spirits, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages.** A deposit system can dramatically reduce litter and solid waste that would otherwise be discarded. Many other states have already added these containers to their laws. For example, Maine’s law covers *all* beverages except dairy products and unprocessed cider.<sup>11</sup> New York can expand its coverage too.

**Increase the deposit from 5-cents to 10-cents and use revenues to support recycling equity.** States with higher deposit fees have higher redemption rates than states with a five-cent fee. In Michigan the deposit fee is ten cents, and the redemption rate in 2019 was 89%.<sup>12</sup> Vermont has a fifteen-cent fee on liquor bottles and the redemption rate

for liquor containers in 2020 was 83%.<sup>13</sup> Increasing the deposit would generate millions of dollars for the state.<sup>14</sup> An expanded Bottle Bill could also save municipalities at least \$70 million by reducing the costs to collect and process materials.<sup>15</sup> The impact of the nickel deposit that was approved in 1982 has eroded over time. A mere inflation update would likely make that deposit nearly *fifteen* cents.<sup>16</sup> It's past time for New York to raise its deposit to a dime.

**Increase the “handling fee.”** Increase the “handling fee,” which has not been increased in 15 years. The “handling fee” is the funding stream for redemption centers to handle redeemable containers. The costs of running a business have significantly increased over the past 15 years, but the handling fee has not. As a result, it is estimated that over 100 centers have had to close, thus undermining the program, reducing consumer convenience, and costing the state jobs.<sup>17</sup>

## **Modernization Generates An Estimated \$100 Million In State Revenues, Money That Can Used To Boost The State’s Recycling and Strengthen The Law**

As mentioned earlier, unredeemed deposits are collected and divided between the state and the containers’ distributors. Eighty percent (80%) of the monies collected from the unredeemed deposits are retained by state government, with \$23 million appropriated to New York’s “Environmental Protection Fund.”<sup>18</sup>

*What happens if the deposit is increased, which will boost redemption rates, as well as dramatically expend the number of redeemable containers?*

To answer this question, this report relies on New York data, estimates, and experiences in other states to develop the projected financial benefit resulting from modernization legislation.<sup>19</sup>

### **Basic Numbers: Total Number Of Beverage Containers Covered By Existing Law**

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, in 2023 the number of beverage containers that were covered under existing law and sold in that year was 9,333,342,418. Of that number, 6,376,291,019 were redeemed for their nickel deposits (68% redemption rate mentioned earlier).<sup>20</sup> Thus, we calculate that there are 2,957,051,399 beverage containers that are *not* redeemed. Each one of those containers had a nickel deposit, we estimate that there is \$147,852,570 in total unredeemed deposits (combining both the state’s and industry’s shares). Under New York law, that amount is split with 80 percent of it going to the state, we calculate that amount at \$118,282,056 is generated in state revenues.<sup>21</sup>

### **Total Number of Beverage Containers Sold In New York – Both Covered By Current Law and Those *Not* Covered.**

According to the Container Recycling Institute, *79 percent of all beverage containers are covered by the current law.*<sup>22</sup> Using that percentage, we estimate that there are 11,814,357,491 beverage containers; the aggregate of both covered under existing law and those not currently covered. Based on our calculations, there are 2,481,015,073 beverage containers *not* covered by the law. [NOTE: The CRI percentage likely includes some containers not included in modernization legislation – dairy and dairy-like products, 100% fruit juice, and 100% vegetable juice products. We do not have estimates on the percentages of these products, but we do not expect them to exceed 10% under the most generous circumstances. Thus, we feel like it would not make a significant difference in our calculations.]

**The Financial Benefit To New York Of Modernizing The Bottle Bill – Nearly \$100 Million In The First Year**  
In order to develop reasonable revenue projections, we relied on data from Oregon, a state that raised its deposit to a dime. Increasing the deposit should boost redemption rates and thus change revenue derived from modernization of the Bottle Bill. In the first year of the increase in its deposit, Oregon redemption rates increased 9 percent.<sup>23</sup>

*Revenue impact from expanding the redemption requirement with an increase in the deposit.*

If the modernization legislation is enacted, New York’s deposit increases to a dime. Using Oregon as a model, in the first year of a dime deposit, the redemption rate would increase to 77 percent (68%+9%). In this scenario, we assume that there are 11,814,357,491 beverage containers redeemable under the new Bottle Bill (as estimated above). If 77 percent are redeemed, we calculate that leaves 2,717,302,222 that are not – **each worth a dime**. Thus, we estimate that under this scenario \$271,730,222 would be available to split between the state (80%) and distributors (20%). New York State would receive \$217,384,178, nearly \$100 million *more* than it gets today.

## Benefits to Local Governments

Last Spring, the research group Eunomia released an independent analysis to qualify the savings to local governments if modernization legislation was approved in New York.<sup>24</sup> According to that report, New York’s local governments could *save* tens of millions of dollars if lawmakers approved legislation to modernize the state’s “Bottle Bill.”<sup>25</sup> The report found that the state’s local governments could save as much as \$108 million if lawmakers approved the “Bigger Better Bottle Bill,” designed to modernize the four-decade-old law.

According to the report, New York municipal governments could *save* at least nearly \$40 million and as much as \$108.6 million if the “Bigger Better Bottle Bill” is approved.

Figure 1: Summary of Savings New York State Municipal Collections Under 90% DRS Scenario



The report examined *six* localities to offer examples of specific savings. The report found that:

- **New York City** could see *savings* between \$34.9 million and \$80 million per year in municipal collection costs;
- The lower Hudson Valley suburban town of **Clarkstown** could see *savings* between \$70k and \$200k per year in municipal collection costs;
- The town of **Riverhead** in a rural section of Long Island could see savings between \$30k and \$110k per year in municipal collection costs;
- The small upstate city of **Troy** could see *savings* between \$40k and \$70k per year in municipal collection costs;
- The city of **Syracuse** could see *savings* between \$90k to \$190k per year in municipal collection costs; and,
- The city of **Buffalo** could see *savings* between \$200k to \$250k per year in municipal collection costs.

The report also found that

- “The modernized DRS [Deposit Return System] would lead to an additional 5.5 billion beverage containers recycled and **diverted from disposal** (e.g., landfill, incineration) or littered annually”;
- “The modernized DRS would **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** in New York State by 358 thousand metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent annually. This is equivalent to removing 83,500 gasoline-power passenger vehicles from the road per year”;
- “The modernized DRS would lead to an approximate 34% **litter reduction** for beverage containers across New York state.”

## A Critical Response to the Recycling Crisis

As reported by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), waste reduction merits priority before recycling in the waste management hierarchy.<sup>26</sup> (“Reduce, Reuse, Recycle,” as the well-known slogan urges.) Moreover, despite another state goal – to recycle the amount of garbage generated by 85% by the year 2050<sup>27</sup> – the governor proposes nothing significant to achieve that ambitious goal. This failure comes on the heels of a state-sponsored report that found New York’s existing recycling efforts “lackluster.”<sup>28</sup>

Expansion of the Bottle Bill can also help incentivize the use of refillable containers. For example, states with deposit laws have a higher share of refillable beer bottles than states without deposit laws.<sup>29</sup> Refillable containers help reduce solid waste, which must otherwise be disposed of in landfills or other garbage facilities. Many refillable containers can be used up to 50 times prior to their recycling.<sup>30</sup> An expansion of the Bottle Bill can help prevent the need to dispose of new solid waste.

The importance of the program, and the need for modernization, was highlighted in the DEC’s Solid Waste Management Plan which estimated that New York will reach its landfill “capacity life” in around 20 years (p. 20). The DEC called for a policy push toward a “circular economy.” The state’s Bottle Bill is an existing, successful example of that approach. *In fact, the DEC recommended that the state “Support proposals, such as modernization and expansion of the Bottle Bill”* (p.37).<sup>31</sup>

**In summary, modernization of the Bottle Bill along the lines of S.5684/A.6543 would generate additional revenues for the state, save localities money, and help New York meet its ambitious recycling goals.**

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, “circular economy” means moving away from a throwaway economy into one where waste is eliminated and, resources are circulated. To find out more, see: <https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/circular-economy-introduction/overview>.

<sup>2</sup> Title 10 (Litter and Solid Waste Control) of Article 27 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/57687.html>.

<sup>5</sup> According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, a “deposit initiator” is the first bottler, distributor, dealer, or agent to collect the refund value (deposit) on a beverage container sold in New York State.

<sup>6</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, “Frequently Asked Questions About the Bottle Bill,” <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/57687.html>.

<sup>7</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, “State Beverage Container Deposit Laws,” March 13, 2020, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/state-beverage-container-laws.aspx>.

<sup>8</sup> New York State Association of Counties, “Bottle Bill White Paper,” June 2016, p.1,

<http://www.nysac.org/files/NYSAC%20Bottle%20Bill%20White%20Paper.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Container Recycling Institute, Bottle Bills in the USA: New York, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/new-york>.

<sup>10</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York’s Bottle Bill, <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8500.html>

<sup>11</sup> Container Recycling Institute, “Redemption Rates and Other Features of 10 U.S. State Deposit Programs,” 2021. [https://www.bottlebill.org/images/PDF/BottleBill10states\\_Summary41321.pdf](https://www.bottlebill.org/images/PDF/BottleBill10states_Summary41321.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Reloop, “Reimagining the Bottle Bill,” <https://bottlebillreimagined.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Reimagining-the-Bottle-Bill-FINAL-JUNE-2022.pdf>. Reloop estimates that an enhanced program would generate \$171m – \$349m available for state investment, p. 33. In order to be conservative, we subtracted the \$129m currently generated from the program. Thus, our estimate of \$40m to \$200m.

<sup>15</sup> Reloop, “Reimagining the Bottle Bill,” June, 2022, <https://bottlebillreimagined.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Reimagining-the-Bottle-Bill-FINAL-JUNE-2022.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI Inflation Calculator, [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Estimate provided by the Empire Redemption Association of New York State.



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- <sup>18</sup> Container Recycling Institute, “Bottle Bill Resource Guide,” <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/new-york>.
- <sup>19</sup> Senate bill 237-C of 2024 and Assembly bill 3653-A of 2024.
- <sup>20</sup> Communication with DEC, December 13, 2024.
- <sup>21</sup> Our estimate is less than that which was reported by the State, \$\$121,105,169. New York State Department of Taxation & Finance, “Fiscal year tax collections: 2022-2023,” [https://www.tax.ny.gov/research/collections/fy\\_collections\\_stat\\_report/2022-2023-annual-statistical-reports.htm#:~:text=During%20SFY%202022%2D2023%2C%20the,business%20taxes%E2%80%94%2426.5%20billion](https://www.tax.ny.gov/research/collections/fy_collections_stat_report/2022-2023-annual-statistical-reports.htm#:~:text=During%20SFY%202022%2D2023%2C%20the,business%20taxes%E2%80%94%2426.5%20billion).
- <sup>22</sup> Container Recycling Institute, “Bottle Bill Resource Guide,” <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/new-york>.
- <sup>23</sup> Staub, C., “Dime deposit drives up Oregon return rate,” Resource Recycling, August 13, 2019, <https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2019/01/29/dime-deposit-drives-up-oregon-return-rate/>. [Note: Oregon’s redemption rate continued to increase over time. Assuming New York followed a similar track, the state should expect smaller revenues over time.]
- <sup>24</sup> The analysis was conducted by Eunomia, see: <https://eunomia.eco/>.
- <sup>25</sup> The referenced reports can be found at: [https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202504/Report\\_Expanded\\_Bottle\\_Bill\\_Impact\\_2025.pdf](https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202504/Report_Expanded_Bottle_Bill_Impact_2025.pdf).
- <sup>26</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8502.html>.
- <sup>27</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, “New York State Solid Waste Management Plan: Building the Circular Economy Through Sustainable Materials Management (2023 - 2032),” December 2023, <https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/waste-management/solid-waste-management-planning/nys>.
- <sup>28</sup> Center for Sustainable Materials Management, “Phase 2: New York Needs Assessment Current Recycling Systems in NYS: Residential, Commercial & Facilities Analysis,” October, 2025, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61dc6efed523942093c032af/t/690b8151cc7fe852038720e2/1762361681966/NY+Needs+Phase+2+-+Final+%283%29.pdf>.
- <sup>29</sup> Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/benefits-of-bottle-bills/bottle-bills-promote-recycling-and-reduce-waste>.
- <sup>30</sup> Reloop, “Policy Instruments to Promote Refillable Beverage Containers,” <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Refillables-policy-Final-Fact-sheet-June30.pdf>.
- <sup>31</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, “New York State Solid Waste Management Plan: Building the Circular Economy Through Sustainable Materials Management (2023 - 2032),” December 2023, <https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/waste-management/solid-waste-management-planning/nys>.