



## CT Bottle Bill Works Coalition Immediate & Long-term Actions to Modernize

Connecticut’s container deposit law (Sections 22a-243 - 22a-246) was enacted in 1978 to increase recycling and reduce litter from discarded bottles and cans. The law initially applied to carbonated beverage containers and was updated in 2008 to include bottled water.

Connecticut’s bottle bill has not seen consistent system updates over time to keep up with changing market trends and inflation. As a result, Connecticut’s redemption rate has dropped more than 44% from where the program was in 2001 (CT redemption rate currently below 50%<sup>1</sup>). This has negatively impacted recycling in our state, resulting in increased waste, unsightly litter, and rising waste management and recycling costs for municipalities.

### **Immediate challenges to be addressed include:**

- The 5-cent deposit on covered container is of little value in today’s economy and fails to effectively incentivize recycling,
- Handling fees are insufficient to support the costs associated with redemption services, which limits the options consumers have to redeem containers.
- Incomplete coverage of beverage categories leaves hundreds of millions of containers in the MSW stream each year (costs associated with recycling or disposing of most beverage containers currently fall on cash-strapped municipalities).
- Lack of convenient redemption locations across the state, leaving consumers with limited options for container deposit redemption, particularly in low-income and underserved communities.

### **The Solution: Modernize the CT Bottle Bill**

Adopt certain common-sense updates to the law immediately:

1. Raise the handling fee on covered containers to 3.5 cents (Effective July 2021).
2. Amend the definition of container to include non-carbonated beverages not currently covered by the program (Effective Jan. 2022).
3. Increase the deposit value on covered containers to at least 10 cents (effective July 2022).
4. Expand the definition of container from “a container made of PET plastic” to “plastic”. (There is no need to limit the scope of the law to PET).

State	Handling Fees
CT	Beer - 1.5¢ Soda, Water - 2¢
ME	3.5 - 4¢
MA	2.25¢ - 3.25¢
NY	3.5¢
VT	3.5 - 4¢

<sup>1</sup> Container Recycling Institute

5. All deposit initiators shall register their packaging information with reverse vending machine system operators and pick-up agents, prior to placement on the market (to ensure consumers can recoup their deposit money when using reverse vending machines).
6. Include wine & liquor into the system now or create a timeline when they will be introduced.

A series of measured updates to the existing program framework would go a long way towards achieving important sustainability and equity outcomes, including increasing recycling, saving towns money, improving the quality of post-consumer recycled materials.

**Additional actions to ensure continual system improvement include:**

- Adopt performance targets backed by enforcement to ensure recycling outcomes continue to improve over time.
- Evaluate equity impacts/increase access to redemption infrastructure with an emphasis on underserved communities.
- Require producers (or DEEP) to recommend a plan to address system integrity including unauthorized cross-border redemption.
- Introduce minimum recycled content legislation for beverage containers to enhance market demand.