

Bottles and Cans Recycling Refund Act

An act relating to recycling and waste reduction

Rep Monica Stonier and Sen June Robinson (SB5502/HB1607)

Beverage containers are a large part of litter and need their own recycling stream

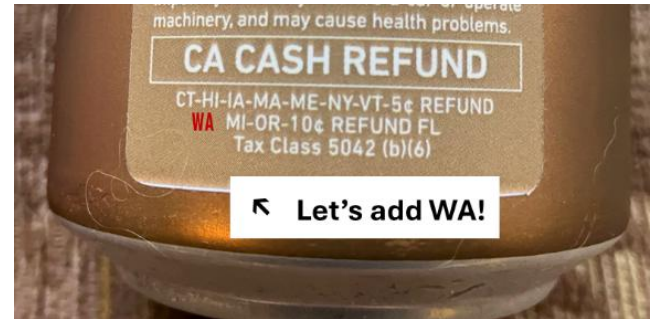
- Beverage containers – metal, glass and plastic – are among the top items found in beach and open space litter cleanups
- In Ecology’s 2022 litter study, they found 42 pounds of beverage containers per mile along our highways.
- In Washington, only 30% of our beverage containers are recycled.
- And with our co-mingled recycling system, glass containers get crushed and their shards contaminate all of the rest of the recyclables.



Litter collected by Ellensburg Youth Corp, along the highway (<https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/august-2023>)

The solution – a bottle bill

- The Recycling Refund Act will **reduce litter** of beverage containers by up to 80%, as demonstrated in states with bottle bills
- The program would **increase recycling rates** in Washington by incentivizing recycling and pulling beverage containers into a clean recycling stream separated from other materials.
- Evidence from Oregon and British Columbia show this program could **increase recycling for beverage containers to 80–90% for bottles and cans within 3–5 years.**
- Less litter and cleaner recycling streams will **save money for local governments** and their rate payers.
- **Combining this Recycling Refunds bill with our new WA Recycling Reform Act accelerates progress.** It ensures statewide access to recycling and allows for efficiencies for infrastructure, reuse, and more.



How a recycling refund program under SB5502/HB1607 would work

- Requires **beverage brands to form a producer responsibility organization (PRO)** to fund and implement a 10-cent refund value redemption program for beverage containers
- Consumers would pay a **10-cent deposit** on most beverage containers and be **refunded that 10-cents** back when they bring their containers to convenient drop-off locations to be recycled or reused.
- **Drop-off locations** would be located throughout the state, including places that offer immediate refunds, in addition to stores in local communities that choose to participate in the program.
- Beverage companies, not Washington residents, would fund convenient drop-off locations in retail parking lots.
- The PRO must achieve a **65% redemption rate by Year 3 and 80% by Year 6** and achieve a **reuse rate** (specific rate TBD in plan) in Year 5 that increases annually.
- The PRO must use unredeemed refund dollars for **education and outreach**, to improve existing drop-off rates, to increase the number of redemption sites, and more
- The PRO will **fully cover the state’s costs** for administration and enforcement.

Strong Public Support

New polling in WA shows **75% support**. Support is consistent across parties and regions, making a bottle bill a politically popular solution.