



## THE PROBLEM

Connecticut's container deposit law (aka the "Bottle Bill") was passed as a litter-prevention measure in 1978. The program has successfully captured billions of single-serve beverage containers, increasing recycling and preventing litter while saving municipalities money on waste collection and disposal.

In 2021, an update to the Bottle Bill was passed as Public Act No. 21-58. This legislation made significant progress for revamping the Bottle Bill, including increasing the bottle deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents and expanding the variety of accepted beverage containers. The bill also increased handling fees, which are paid by the beverage distributor to the retailer for funding the overhead costs of redemption centers.

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

While the updated bill from 2021 made important strides to revamp the program, there are still areas for future improvement.

**Liquor and Wine Bottles** - As 60% of the glass (by weight) in single-stream recycling consists of liquor and wine bottles, this was a big missed opportunity. In fact, much of the glass collected through single-stream does not get recycled, and its weight contributes significantly to the increased cost of curbside recycling in Connecticut.

**Nips** - Public Act No. 21-58 did include a surcharge of 5¢ for nips (small spirit or liquor bottles, often 50 mL or less), providing funding for local municipalities. However, these mini bottles that contribute significantly to roadside litter were not included in the deposit system.

**Stewardship Organization Provision** - As part of the 2021 Bottle Bill update, a provision was made for the possibility of a "stewardship organization" of deposit initiators, AKA beverage industry members. Since this organization has the power to generate reforms, it is essential to ensure that any plans proposed by this organization of beverage industries uphold the goals of the Bottle Bill.



**Consumer Education** - Currently, bottle return rates are hovering around 45%. Increasing the deposit to 10¢ and increasing the handling fee to support redemption centers will help, but there is more work to be done on increasing awareness of the program. Importantly, public education must be prioritized for the increased deposit and how and where to return bottles and cans, so that we do not inadvertently penalize our most vulnerable communities.

## FAST FACTS

- Beverage containers account for 40% of litter.
- Deposits have the potential to reduce beverage container litter by up to 84%.
- 81% of CT likely voters support expanding the state's bottle deposit program to include all recyclable containers (Greenberg Quinlan poll, January 2020)

## Is Curbside Good Enough?

Curbside is NOT a compatible solution with all beverage containers. Glass containers are especially problematic for recycling facilities. The Bottle Bill is currently the ONLY effective program for recycling glass containers and preserves the quality of plastics.

## MORE INFORMATION

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