



CONNECTICUT BOTTLE REDEMPTION SYSTEM

By: Kristen Miller, Associate Legislative Attorney
Shannon King, Legislative Research Intern

BOTTLE REDEMPTION LAWS

Bottle redemption laws, also known as “container deposit laws” or “bottle bills”, require a minimum refundable deposit on certain beverage containers in order to encourage recycling.

Besides Connecticut, nine other states have bottle bills: California, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont.

The types of beverage containers included in a bottle bill vary by state, but may include containers for beer and malt beverages, soft drinks, and water.

Information about each state’s law is available in the Container Recycling Institute’s [Bottle Bill Resource Guide](#). The institute is a nonprofit organization that studies and promotes policies and programs to increase beverage container recovery and recycling.

ISSUE

This report (1) summarizes how Connecticut’s bottle redemption system operates and (2) identifies the amount of money the system generates for the state.

SUMMARY

Connecticut law establishes a redemption system generally requiring consumers to pay a five-cent deposit on each purchased bottle or can of beer, malt beverages, soda water, carbonated soft drinks, and water. The deposit may be redeemed by returning the beverage container to a retailer or bringing it to a redemption center. Unclaimed deposits are transferred to the state’s General Fund. In each fiscal year from 2012 to 2014, the state received over \$27 million from unclaimed deposits.

BOTTLE REDEMPTION SYSTEM

Process

Connecticut’s bottle redemption law operates as a cycle involving transactions between distributors, retailers, and consumers. It operates as follows:

1. a retailer pays a beverage container distributor five-cents for each beverage container that the distributor delivers;



2. a consumer pays the retailer five-cents for each beer, soft drink, or water container that he or she purchases from the retailer;
3. the retailer or a redemption center pays the consumer five-cents for each container the consumer returns;
4. the distributor reimburses the retailer or redemption center five-cents for each beer, soft drink, and water container returned, plus a handling fee of one-and-a-half cents for each beer container and two-cents for each soft drink or water container; and
5. the distributor pays the State of Connecticut the five-cents for each unclaimed deposit (CGS §§ [22a-244](#), [22a-245](#), and [22a-245a](#)).

Exemptions

The law exempts noncarbonated beverage containers of at least three liters in size from its requirements. It also exempts any beverage container (1) sold on interstate passenger carriers (e.g., planes or trains) or (2) made from high density polyethylene (i.e., with an HDPE designation or #2 recycling symbol) (CGS §§ [22a-243\(3\)](#) and [22a-244\(a\)](#)).

Manufacturers that annually bottle and sell up to 250,000 noncarbonated beverage containers that are 20 ounces or less in size may apply for an exemption from participating in the redemption program (CGS § [22a-245b](#)).

MONEY GENERATED

By law, distributors must remit unclaimed bottle deposits to the Department of Revenue Services (DRS) for transfer to the state’s General Fund.

According to DRS’ [Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2013-2014](#), the state received over \$27 million from unclaimed deposits in each fiscal year from 2012 to 2014. Table 1 lists the revenue generated each fiscal year.

Table 1: Unclaimed Deposits Transferred to the General Fund, FYs 12 to 14

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Revenue</i>
2013-2014	\$27,384,746
2012-2013	\$27,528,488
2011-2012	\$27,134,224

KM/SK:bs