

Connecticut's Bottle Bill

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What is Connecticut's beverage container recycling law ("bottle bill")?

Connecticut's bottle bill is the law that establishes a system for recycling certain beverage containers. The system is driven by the assignment of a deposit on the containers at the time of purchase which is then returned to the consumer when the consumer brings the empty container to be recycled.

How does Connecticut's bottle bill work?

The bottle bill establishes a cycle involving transactions between distributors, retailers, and consumers:

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 purchased from the retailer;
3. the retailer or a redemption center pays the consumer five-cents for each empty 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 (via the Department of Revenue Services (DRS)) the five-cents for each unclaimed deposit.

The back of this issue brief also provides an infographic of the process.

Unclaimed Bottle Deposit Revenue

By law, distributors quarterly remit unclaimed bottle deposits (less bank fees) to DRS for transfer to the state's General Fund.

Table 1 lists the revenue generated from unclaimed bottle deposits for the three most recent fiscal years, as reported in DRS' latest annual report. According to the report, 101 entities remitted these funds to DRS.

Table 1: Unclaimed Deposits Transferred to the General Fund, FYs 14 to 16

FY	Revenue
2015-16	\$33,530,941
2014-15	30,599,746
2013-14	27,384,746

Source: [DRS Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Annual Report](#)

Proposed Changes to the Law

In recent years, the legislature has considered several changes to the bottle bill. They include things such as:

- increasing the deposit value
- increasing the handling fee amount
- expanding the scope of the bottle bill to include wine, liquor, juice, tea, or sports drinks bottles
- replacing the deposit with a nonrefundable recycling fee to fund recycling and anti-littering programs

What beverage containers are covered by the bottle bill?

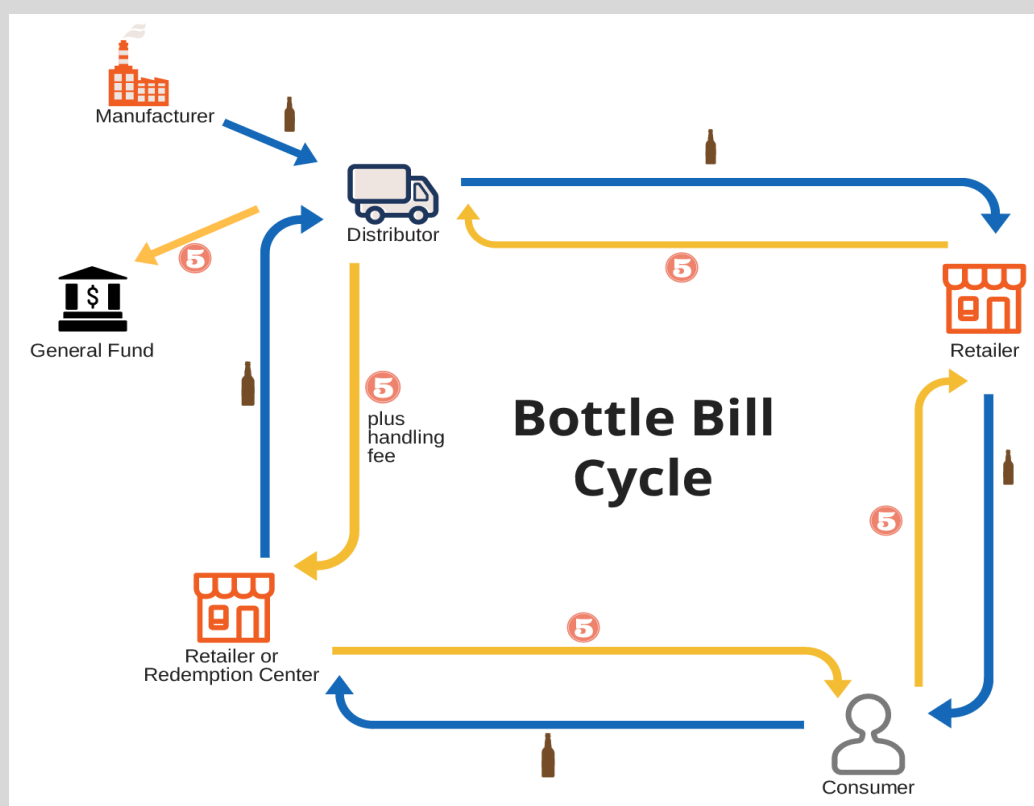
The bottle bill applies to beer and other malt beverages, carbonated soft drinks (including mineral and soda waters), and waters.

The law exempts water beverage containers of at least three liters in size from its requirements. It also exempts beverage containers (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).

Manufacturers that annually bottle and sell up to 250,000 water beverage containers that are 20 ounces or less in size may apply to DEEP for an exemption from the bottle bill.

Must a retailer take back all beverage containers covered by the bottle bill?

No. By law, a retailer is generally required to take back only containers of the kind, size, and brand that the retailer sells. It also can refuse to take back containers that are not properly labeled or have foreign contents, or if there is a redemption center no greater than one mile away.



Infographic: Bottle Bill Process

This illustration depicts how Connecticut's bottle bill recycling system operates.

The **clockwise flow of beverage containers** (shown by the blue arrows), begins with the creation of a container and a distributor delivering it to a retailer, and ends with the container's pickup for recycling by the distributor.

And the **counter-clockwise flow of deposits** (shown by the yellow arrows) begins with the retailer giving the deposit (five cents) to the distributor and ends with the distributor giving unclaimed deposits to the state.

Learn
More

CGS §§ [22a-243](#) to [22a-246](#) and the related [regulations](#)

"Store Obligations to Take Back Beverage Containers," [2016-R-0175](#)

"Bottle Bill Handling Fees," [2016-R-0093](#)

"Connecticut Bottle Redemption System," [2015-R-0211](#)

