

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. Under this cycle:

1. a retailer pays a beverage container distributor 5 cents for each beverage container that the distributor delivers;
2. a consumer pays the retailer 5 cents for each beer, soft drink, or water container purchased from the retailer;
3. the retailer or a redemption center pays the consumer 5 cents for each empty container the consumer returns;
4. the distributor reimburses the retailer or redemption center 5 cents for each beer, soft drink, and water container returned, plus a handling fee of 1.5 cents for each beer container and 2 cents for each soft drink or water container; and
5. the distributor pays the State of Connecticut (via the Department of Revenue Services (DRS)) 5 cents for each unclaimed deposit (CGS §§ [22a-243](#) to [22a-246](#) and the related [regulations](#)).

The back of this issue brief 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 five most recent fiscal years for which data is available, as reported in DRS annual reports.

Table 1: Unclaimed Deposits Transferred to the General Fund, FYs 14 to 18

FY	Revenue
2017-18	\$36,519,543
2016-17	35,600,873
2015-16	33,530,941
2014-15	30,599,746
2013-14	27,384,746

Sources: DRS Annual Reports, FY [2015-2016](#) and FY [2017-2018](#)

Proposed Changes to the Law

In 2009, the legislature expanded the scope of the bottle bill to apply to water containers. Below, we list some proposed changes to the law recently considered by the legislature.

- increasing the deposit value or handling fee amount
- expanding the bottle bill's scope to include wine, liquor, juice, tea, coffee, and sports or energy drink bottles
- establishing instead a nonrefundable recycling fee to fund recycling and anti-littering programs
- allowing redemption centers to keep, per container, 1 cent of the deposit amount
- expanding the area within which a retailer can choose not to take back containers

What beverage containers are covered by the bottle bill?

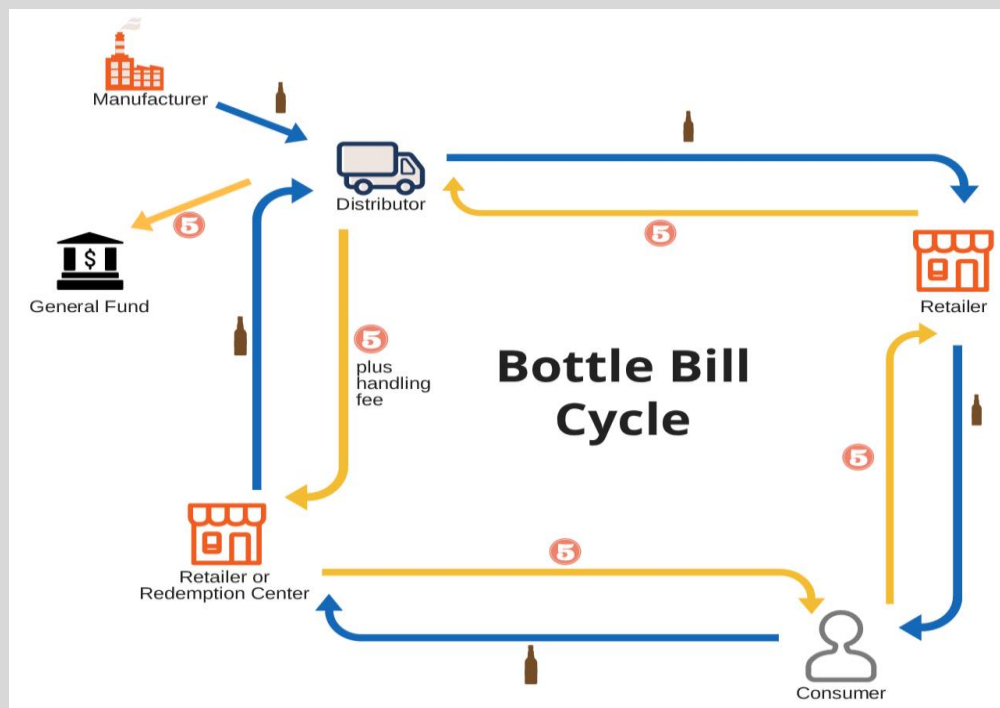
The bottle bill applies to beer and other malt beverages, carbonated soft drinks (including mineral and soda waters), and waters.

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 may apply to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for an exemption from the bottle bill if they annually bottle and sell no more than 250,000 water beverage containers that are 20 ounces or less in size.

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 more than one mile away.



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 (5 cents) to the distributor and ends with the distributor giving unclaimed deposits to the state.

Learn
More

"Unclaimed Bottle Deposits," [2017-R-0259](#)

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

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

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

