



**DATE:** July 24, 2024

**TO:** Waste Management Authority

**FROM:** Alma Freeman, Communications Manager

**SUBJECT:** Update on California's Beverage Container Recycling Program

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**SUMMARY**

Enacted in 1987, California's Bottle Bill has been one of the most successful and cost-effective recycling and litter-reduction programs in the United States, targeting aluminum, glass, plastic, and bimetal containers. At the July 24 meeting, Susan Collins, president of the Container Recycling Institute, will present an update on the state's bottle return system to date and challenges and opportunities ahead.

**DISCUSSION**

California's container recycling program works through a deposit/refund mechanism. At checkout, consumers pay a California Redemption Value (CRV) deposit of five or 10 cents — depending on the size of the container — every time they purchase a beverage. The state then returns the money when a bottle or can is brought to a recycler. Since the late 1980s, 482 billion CRV-eligible containers have been recycled in California, totaling more than 10 million tons of bottles and cans.

That money is either returned to consumers when they recycle their containers at a redemption center, or it goes to a hauler or non-profit recycler when disposed via curbside recycling. Unclaimed deposits from unreturned containers go into the state's Beverage Recycling Container Fund, which is intended to support recycling centers, reduce litter and provide grants for new recycling initiatives. However, despite its potential, the program faces a range of challenges, foremost among them a widespread closure of redemption centers across the state, dropping more than half over the last decade. A number of efforts are underway to revive the program, including SB 1013, which expands eligible CRV containers to wine and liquor and adds stricter requirements for retailer participation to ensure equitable access to convenient recycling locations.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.