

Do Bottle Bills Impact Curbside Recycling Programs?: National Waste & Recycling Association White Paper



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The National Waste & Recycling Association (“NWRA”) announced on February 21st that it had published a white paper titled:

Bottle Bills Impact Curbside Recycling Programs (“White Paper”)

The White Paper discusses the ways in which the NWRA believes bottle bills can affect curbside recycling programs.

The NWRA describes itself as representing the private sector waste and recycling service industries. Its members are stated to conduct business in all 50 states and include companies that manage waste, recycling and medical waste, equipment manufacturers and distributors.

Bottle bills are described as container deposit legislation or deposit return systems where consumers pay deposits (i.e., 5 or 10 cents) when purchasing beverages that may include:

- Metal beverage containers
- Glass beverage containers
- Plastic beverage containers

The deposit is refunded when the container is returned.

The *White Paper* states that bottle bills:

... divert valuable materials away from recycling facilities, or materials recovery facilities (MRFs). This reduces the overall value of materials collected through curbside recycling programs that feed MRFs.

Ten states are listed as having bottle bills:

- California
- Connecticut
- Hawaii
- Iowa
- Maine
- Massachusetts,
- Michigan
- New York
- Oregon
- Vermont

The *White Paper* states that:

. . . while only about 5% by weight, aluminum and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) beverage containers are 30% of the blended value.

As a result, the *White Paper* states that requiring customers to transport and deposit their recyclables at collection facilities removes:

. . . up to 89% of plastics and aluminum from curbside recycling.

Concern is expressed that because most MRFs share commodity revenues with municipalities (offsetting the cost of curbside recycling) the loss of such revenue would increase curb recycling costs which might threaten such programs.

A copy of the *White Paper* can be downloaded [here](#).