



Don't Weaken Maine's Most Successful Recycling Program

Oppose: LD 1703

An Act to Create Equity for Wine and Spirits Container Deposits

Sponsored by: Rep. Ellie Espling

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The "Bottle Bill" is Maine's most successful recycling program and one of the best in the nation.

LD 1703 would weaken and undermine Maine's Bottle Bill by reducing the redemption value of wine and spirits bottles from 15¢ to 5¢. There's no evidence that a single redemption value on all containers has any advantages. In fact, eleven Canadian provinces and seven U.S. states have more than one deposit/refund value.

LD 1703 would create devastating, unnecessary problems. It would:

- **Slash the redemption rate for wine and spirit bottles by up to 50 percent.** Higher deposit rates for beverage containers boosts their return rate. No jurisdiction in the world has ever reduced the incentive to recycle containers; and in fact, the trend is to increase the redemption value over time, due to inflation.
- **Cause Maine's redemption centers to lose income.** Redemption centers earn 3 1/2 to 4¢ for handling each container. These businesses are already stretched thin and can't afford the serious risk to their businesses and employees that a lower redemption value, and fewer containers, would bring.
- **Result in Maine charities losing an estimated 10 percent of charitable income from bottle drives.** Many Maine charities—animal shelters, public health organizations, schools, scouting groups, and sports teams—rely on bottle drives to raise funds and operate on tiny budgets. They would receive one-third of what they currently do for wine and spirit container donations.
- **Create higher waste management costs for municipalities and taxpayers.** Towns would have to handle an additional 8,000 tons of glass waste that would no longer be managed through redemption centers. In 1990, a 15¢ redemption fee was placed on wine and spirit containers to avoid this cost and burden from municipalities.
- **Unleash mass confusion upon implementation, with Maine consumers paying unfairly.** If the bill was to pass, at some point labels would change and consumers would only receive a 5¢ refund for containers for which they paid a 15¢ deposit. The implementation of this ill-advised and devastating proposed change has not been well-planned by LD 1703 supporters.
- **Cost the State of Maine about \$500,000 in the first year alone.** The fiscal note attached to LD 1703 is estimated at \$150,000 for implementation. In addition, the State General Fund would lose its annual \$350,000 share of unclaimed bottle deposits.