

March 28, 2025

Protect Oregon's Bottle Bill

Oregonians treasure their Bottle Bill, regardless of how they vote, where they live or what they do for a living. Thanks to the unique model of Oregon's Bottle Bill, we've been recovering and recycling our beverage containers longer and better than anyone else in the country.

One of the great things about Oregon's Bottle Bill is that the private beverage sector bears the cost of the system, not taxpayers. It uses zero taxpayer dollars to fulfill a public good and serve every one of the state's more than four million residents.

But now, despite this success, a proposed new beverage tax in the Oregon Legislature is threatening one of our most cherished environmental legacies to fill an unrelated budget hole. HB 3940 offers a beverage sales tax as one option to pay for the growing need for wildfire defense in Oregon.

We understand the importance of creating more funding to fight wildfires in Oregon, but a beverage tax is not the solution. And now is not the time. It would raise food costs when Oregonians can least afford it.

That's why environmental and beverage sector groups remain strongly united in opposing a beverage tax in the Bottle Bill and ensuring Oregon's Bottle Bill remains an asset to Oregon for the long term.

It's a beverage tax no matter how you do it – taking from or adding to the present deposit for a new purpose. If consumers don't receive their full deposit back, it's a tax – and a broken promise to Oregonians.

There are better ways to support wildfire funding than undermining our beloved recycling system. Since 1971, when the Oregon Legislature created the nation's first deposit-return system, Oregon has routinely achieved the highest redemption rate in the country.

The Bottle Bill provides an essential lifeline for Oregonians in economically uncertain times. Every year, more than \$200 million is refunded to Oregonians, in some cases determining whether food is on the table or a utility bill is paid. Nearly 7,000 families use it to save for college or disability, and it helps more than 225,000 Oregonians each year pay for their groceries through the BottleDrop Plus program. In addition, the Bottle Bill provides a critical source of funding for 6,900 nonprofits in every part of Oregon.

Here in Oregon, it's second nature to return our drink containers and get our refunds. Stacking a tax on top of the deposit and then telling customers they only get part of it back will create friction and confusion. Ultimately, placing a tax in the Bottle Bill will gut one of our most beloved statewide programs, lower trust in the Bottle Bill, and weaken the desire to participate.

We urge you to join us in opposing a harmful beverage tax and protecting Oregon's Bottle Bill.

Thank you for helping us keep one of Oregon's proudest accomplishments alive and well. Together, we can keep a tax out of the Bottle Bill.

