

Beverage Containers

The Problem

The [Ocean Conservancy's 2022 report](#) found that beverage containers, plastic, glass, and metal, were amongst the top 10 most common trash items found in beaches both in California and worldwide. Every day, the U.S. generates 60 million plastic water bottles, most of which end up in landfills. This issue isn't just siloed to water bottles, as Americans are estimated to generate 120,000 aluminum cans every single minute! However, a large portion of these beverage containers are recyclable. For example, aluminum is one of the most recyclable materials on the shelf today, with aluminum cans already comprised of an average of 73% recycled content.

California Beverage Container Recycling Program

California enacted the [California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act](#) through the passing of AB 2020 in 1986 to encourage consumers to recycling beverage containers. The bill, often known as the Bottle Bill, requires consumers to pay a [California Redemption Value \(CRV\) fee](#) when they purchase beverages. This fee can be redeemed when they return the empty containers to recycling centers. Beverages packages in aluminum, glass, plastic, or bi-metal are subject to the Bottle Bill and have a CRV fee of \$0.05 for containers less than 24 ounces, and \$0.10 for containers over 24 ounces.

In 2022, [SB 1013 \(Atkins\)](#) was signed into law to improve and expand the scope of the Bottle Bill. SB 1013 added a deposit for wines and distilled spirits, which has been exempt from the CRV program until the bills passage. Starting on January 1, 2025, wine and distilled spirits packaged in a box, bladder, or pouch, or similar container, will be subject to a CRB fee of \$0.25. The Bottle Bill was expanded again the following year when [SB 353 \(Dodd\)](#) was passed to add fruit juice containers that 46 ounces or more and vegetable juice containers over 16 ounces to the program, starting in January 1, 2024. SB 353 also implemented measures to provide fairer compensation for redemption centers to prevent closure of these facilities. CalRecycle is now authorized to process payments to using either a three or twelve month average scrap value, whichever is higher, as well as provide payments of \$60/ton to rural recycling centers to offset the high costs of glass recycling.

Recycle & Redeem Your Beverage Containers

- [CalRecycle](#) – Statewide
- [Earth 911](#) – Nationwide
- [Recology](#) – Yolo & Sacramento County

Research & Relevant Articles

- [California's Bottle Bill: The Path to Redemption](#) – Story of Stuff, 2/2022
- [The Aluminum Can Advantage: Sustainability Key Performance Indicators](#) – The Aluminum Association, 11/2021



- [35 Years of International Coastal Cleanup Data Demonstrate a Recyclability Crisis](#) – Ocean Conservancy, 9/31/21
- [Packaging Challenges in the Beverage Industry](#) – Robopac, 6/19/20
- [Beverage Companies Embrace Recycling, Until It Costs Them](#) – NY Times, 7/4/19
- [2018 United States National Postconsumer Plastic Bottle Recycling Report](#) - American Chemistry Council and Association of Plastic Recyclers, 2019

Links

- [Beverage Container Recycling](#) – CalRecycle
- [California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act – Bottle Bill](#) – Wine Institute