

An Expanded Bottle Bill: Another Threat to Recycling

The proposed 2019-2020 New York State budget includes a provision to expand the “Bottle Bill” to include deposits on sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit and vegetable beverages, and ready-to-drink coffees and teas.

At a time when recycling is being threatened by global economic forces, the bottle bill expansion would weaken New York’s resource renewal and recycling capability. The proposal would place an unnecessary and counter-productive economic burden on local governments and consumers without delivering any of the intended environmental benefits.

In 2017/2018, China rocked global recycling markets with a swift series of policy changes. The impacts – a 90% drop in market value for mixed paper and a 63% drop in the value of the traditional recycling stream.

An Unnecessary Burden on Consumers

Not only would numerous everyday products become more expensive, but consumers are required to store and transport these items to redemption centers despite having access to convenient curbside recycling programs for these materials. At the same time, curbside recycling costs will increase to cover the significant losses incurred by the removal of higher value material from the resource stream.

An Economic and Budgetary Hit on Local Governments

Local governments would suffer a collective loss of over **\$42 million annually (\$18 million of which is lost commodity revenues)** from their recycling programs. The value of this material is a significant foundation of the economic investment made in building our recycling infrastructure and helps pay for these programs. This expansion could blow a hole in many municipal budgets while they struggle to keep recycling afloat.

A Weakening of New York’s Recycling Community, and Infrastructure

New York has a significant public and private recycling infrastructure – tens of millions of dollars of investment. Recycling works in New York because this infrastructure works. **Removing these plastic and aluminum containers from the recycling stream (by up to 50 percent)** pulls the economic rug out from under these investments and weakens this infrastructure because they are key revenue generators.

We Support a *Limited* Bottle Bill – on Glass

We support expanding the Bottle Bill to additional glass containers. There are only limited and low value markets for recycled glass. Extracting glass from mixed residential recyclables is costly and further adds to the glass marketing challenge. Placing a deposit on wine, liquor and other glass bottles will divert more glass from the municipal recycling stream into the deposit system, reducing municipal recycling costs and improving marketability of the glass.

Extending the bottle bill to wine and liquor will divert more glass, over **150,000 tons**, from the municipal recycling stream and into the deposit system, thereby reducing municipal recycling costs.

Currently, less than 20% of glass that enters MRFs in New York is made into a new product.

Glass that is redeemed through the bottle bill system is much more likely to end up in a higher end use than glass produced at Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). This is because it is kept separate from other materials, whereas glass produced by MRFs is contaminated with shredded paper, bottle caps, straws, corks and other small items. Many MRFs lack the equipment to “clean up” their glass for marketing purposes, particularly smaller MRFs that cannot justify the costs of cleaning equipment due to the low (negative) value of processed glass.

By expanding the bottle bill on glass, the state will be able to help meet their recycling goals along with providing more revenue towards environmental initiatives.

VALUE OF RECYCLING – 2018 AVERAGE	VALUE OF RECYCLING – POST BOTTLE BILL EXPANSION
\$40.48 per ton	\$26.25* per ton

**This number reflects selling PET (water bottles, soda bottles, to-go clam shell containers, cups etc.) as we do today. By removing the PET bottles from the current mix, it will increase the non-bottle PET percentage in the stream to over 10% which would make this commodity inferior and reduce recycling rates and value even more.*

New York City alone would lose over \$4 million dollars a year in just commodity revenue.

New York State recycles more than 1.5 million tons of recycling each year. The endorsing companies below process over 80% of the states recycling including the following cities and towns: Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Newburgh/Beacon, New York City, and Long Island.

