

MAINE BEVERAGE REDEMPTION GROUP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN OPERATIONS PLAN TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND REDUCE COSTS IN MAINE'S RETURNABLE BEVERAGE CONTAINER PROGRAM

MAY 1, 2026

PART I INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The objective of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from professional service vendors to provide administrative and management services to a new non-profit organization of beverage interests that are members of the Maine Beverage Redemption Group (the MBRG).

The MBRG is comprised of the six commingling groups approved by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Those commingling groups, in turn, are comprised of the individual initiators of deposit (IODs) that sell roughly 1 billion containers of aluminum, plastic and glass subject to Maine's returnable beverage container program. Approximately 800,000,000 of those containers are recovered annually pursuant to this system.

For the past twenty years because of the governing law, commingling groups have operated independently in collecting the containers that their individual members sell in Maine. This has required the entities that accept beverage containers from Maine consumers (redemption centers, reverse vending machines, bag drop-off systems, etc.) to separate and sort those containers by brand. As required by the returnable beverage container law (Title 38 Chapter 33) and more specifically by M.R.S. 3107 § 3-B, these IOD are required to form a non-profit cooperative of commingling groups (the Co-op) that will manage all beverage containers under a single organization. The ultimate objective is to phase out the process of sorting containers by brand and sort them by material type.

The Co-op currently expects to be required to facilitate containers being sorted by brand by October 2026, although the Co-op must begin implementing the initial steps of its Plan as soon as possible.

B. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. From the time the RFP is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the Co-op regarding the RFP must be made through the Co-op Board of Directors. No other person is empowered to make binding statements regarding the RFP.
2. The MBRG reserves the right to reject any proposals, as well as the right to conduct or not conduct a similar proposal in the future. This request for proposals is in no way an agreement, obligation, or contract, and the MBRG is not responsible for the cost of preparation.
3. All proposals must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFP and all written supplements and amendments. Proposals should follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified below in the "Proposal Submission Requirements" section of the RFP.
4. Bidders will take note that in evaluating a proposal submitted in response to the RFP, the Co-op will consider materials provided in the proposal, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal information of previous contract history with the Bidder (if any). The Co-op also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating a Bidder's experience and capabilities.
5. The proposal must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Bidder and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
6. The RFP and the awarded Bidder's proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract.
7. The Co-op, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in proposals received in response to the RFP.
8. All applicable laws, whether herein contained, are included by this reference. It is the Bidder's responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them,
9. Although it is the intent of the MBRG to enter into Master Agreements with a service provider, acceptance of a proposal by the MBRG or satisfaction of the RFP's requirements do not guarantee that MBRG will enter into an agreement or contract with the service provider.
10. If a vendor submitting a proposal discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in this solicitation document, the vendor shall immediately provide the MBRG with written notice of the problem and request that the solicitation document be clarified or modified. Without disclosing the

source of the request, the MBRG may modify the solicitation document prior to the date fixed for submission of proposals by issuing an addendum to all vendors to whom the solicitation document was sent.

C. CONTRACT TERM

The terms of this RFP would be for the five (5) years outlined in the Plan. The MBRG will negotiate an extension with the current vendor or, if an agreement cannot be reached, issue a new RFP for the continued management and operation of the Co-op.

PART II - SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

The vendor will be responsible for the administrative, financial and managerial activities of the Co-op. The Plan is Appendix A to Department Order R-0000360PSP-B-N, has been approved by the DEP and may be subject to additional changes. Prospective bidders should refer to this document. A summarized listing of the statutorily required components of the Plan is set forth in MRSA 3107 3-B, (B)) and a timeframe is listed in the Plan summary at page 1-2 of Appendix A.

A. ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING

- Development of the budget/start-up costs for implementation of the Plan
- Development of a timeline for the Co-op to meet its regulatory requirements
- Development of an operational plan for the Co-op upon award of RFP.
- Development of a staffing plan for the Co-op's operation
- Development of a stakeholder engagement strategy with both near term and long-term objectives to build success for Co-op
- Development of reporting forms for product registrations and establishment of a registration database
- Standardization of reporting forms for collecting sales information from commingling groups
- Coordination of commingling group pick-ups with 3rd party pickup agents at redemption centers
- Establishment and implementation of system to provide bags for redemption centers
- Organizing MBRG meetings and preparation of materials/reports to its Board
- Development of Co-op website

- Engagement of a 3rd party advisor to develop recommendations to support refillable beverage container program
- Identification of any accounting, legal or other professional services to ensure appropriate segregation of duties
- (MBRG Board of Directors has initiated the first several meetings of the Advisory Group)

B. FINANCIAL AND AUDIT

- Determination of costs associated with operation of the Co-op, payment to DEP and contribution to Technology Fund
- Allocation of costs and coordination of billing activity to individual commingling groups
- Coordination of payment to redemption centers
- Accounting for unclaimed deposits
- Establishment of audit procedures for sales numbers, redemption and unclaimed deposits of individual IODs
- Hiring and management of 3rd party professional firm to engage in independent audit/review and/or agreed upon procedures.

C. MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Developing a series of protocols to establish and/or ensure the following:

- Development of governance structure and procedures for Co-op in cooperation with legal counsel
- Track and manage all producer and stakeholder interactions
- Auditable sales data reporting (or its near equivalent) by commingling groups/IODs
- Proper allocation of pick-up locations and scrap to commingling groups/IODs
- Identification through retail audits and redemption of unregistered/unpaid producers and UPCs
- Identification of unregistered items or errant IODs (to be reported to the State for enforcement)
- Calculation of a statewide redemption rate
- Capability to search for a particular label / UPC to determine appropriate commingling group and pickup agent; redemption center and obligated dealer

locations

- Implementation of education and outreach per Section 3107, 3-B, E (4)
- Developing and submitting the Co-op Annual Report per Section 3107, 3-B, E.
- Implementation of Co-op mission, programs and possible branding

PART III. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. ELIGIBILITY TO SUBMIT

Parties interested in submitting bids to implement and operate the Plan should have general experience in advancing an efficient and effective circular economy. This includes management or consulting services for extended producer responsibility programs. Bidders should have general experience in the field of recycling and resource recovery, especially as relates to beverage containers or plastic, aluminum and glass generally. Bidders should have a strong accounting background and an ability to manage sales and/or reporting data from multiple sources as the operating entity will have to manage that information from six different commingling groups.

Expertise in the beverage industry and specifically in the administration or operation of returnable beverage container programs is strongly preferred but not required.

B. QUALIFICATIONS

Interested parties should present a brief statement of qualifications. Describe the history of your organization, especially regarding skills pertinent to the specific work required by the RFP, experience with product stewardship programs, returnable beverage container programs, a strong understanding of Maine's regulatory environment and any special or unique characteristics of your organization that would make it especially qualified to perform the required work activities. Please include a description of any projects that your organization has worked on within the past five (5) years that reflect success, experience and expertise needed in performing the work outlined in Part II – Scope of Services to Be Provided. This includes any management and operational work provided to regulated entities operating a stewardship organization in a jurisdiction - within the United States or outside of it - that has adopted an extended producer responsibility model for the collection of solid waste and recycling.

Please provide a company profile, along with a list of the persons who will be directly responsible for carrying out the company's work pursuant to its proposal and a brief description of their individual experience.

C. REFERENCES

Please provide three references from among your organization's existing clients.

PART IV – MANAGEMENT FEES

Please provide a schedule of your organization's fees for providing the administrative, financial and management services described in this RFP. To the extent that any portion of the fees are not fixed, please provide the basis for the calculation.

Please indicate a cost of your proposed management fee for each individual year of the five-year contract based upon the activities outline in the Plan for that year.

PART V – SUBMISSION DIRECTIONS

A. PROPOSAL

Please direct any questions, and submit an electronic version of the proposal no later than 5 pm on June 5, 2026, with the subject line "Proposal," to:

Cheryl Timberlake at ctimberlake@capitolinsights.com and

Newell Augur at naugur@pierceatwood.com

B. INTERVIEWS

Finalists will be contacted to schedule an interview, to be conducted virtually with the Co-op's Board of Directors.