

# California Beverage Container Recycling Fact Sheet

The goal of the California beverage container recycling program is to reduce beverage container litter and waste by recycling at least 80 percent of the aluminum, glass, plastic, and bimetal beverage containers sold.

- Beverage containers covered by the program include those filled with carbonated mineral and soda water and other similar carbonated soft drinks, noncarbonated soft drinks, wine coolers and distilled spirit coolers, beer and malt beverages, as well as noncarbonated water including noncarbonated mineral water, sport drinks, coffee and tea drinks, vegetable juice in beverage containers 16oz. or less. The program also includes carbonated and noncarbonated fruit drinks that contain any percentage of fruit juice and 100% fruit juices that are packaged in containers less than 46 oz. in volume.
- California's recycling program is funded through redemption payments made to the state by beverage distributors on each beverage container sold in the state. Revenues are deposited in the California Beverage Container Recycling Fund (Fund). California Refund Value (CRV) payments are made out of the Fund to consumers when they return beverage containers to certified recycling centers.
- Unlike traditional bottle bills, the California program utilizes the existing public, private and non-profit recycling infrastructure. The same infrastructure that handles most other recyclables, including non-redemption value glass, plastic and metals. As a result, the program compliments, rather than competes, with these programs.
- By not utilizing beverage distributors, the program eliminates the need for expensive and pointless sorting of beverage containers by brand and distributor. It also eliminates any need for separating CRV containers from non-CRV containers by annually establishing a statewide 'commingled rate' for each material and recycling program type.

The CRV paid to consumers when they recycle containers at recycling centers is 5¢ for each beverage container less than 24 ounces and 10¢ for each container 24 ounces or greater.

Consumers have several recycling options under the program:

1. They can return containers for recycling and receive the redemption value at a supermarket-based "convenience zone" recycling center. (Accounted for 22% of returns in 2008.)
2. They can return containers for recycling and receive the redemption value at a certified privately operated recycling center, or "donate" the containers and their redemption values to a non-profit recycling program. (Accounted for 60% of returns in 2008.)
3. They can leave the containers in their curbside recycling program, which when retains the redemption value to help offset operating costs. (Accounted for 18% of returns in 2008.)

Program statistics:

- As of 2008, the program is achieving a 74% recycling rate.
- The roughly 25% of redemption payments left over from unredeemed containers are used for program and recycling-related activities, including handling fee payments to convenience zone recyclers, payments to local curbside programs, payments to cities and counties, and recycling grants. Unclaimed CRV funds are also used to support the administration of the recycling program (about 4.2 percent of total program expenditures).
- About 80 percent of containers recycled are redeemed for cash, with the balance recycled through curbside or other collection programs.
- 25% to 35% of plastic is collected at curbside, and 6% of high value aluminum cans
- The program has been particularly helpful to curbside recycling programs. **In 2008, California's curbside recycling programs received about \$173 million in revenue from the container recycling law.**