



Massachusetts
Department
of
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

Municipal Benefits of an Expanded Bottle Bill*

The Bottle Bill, enacted in 1982, requires a nickel deposit on beer and soda containers. Consumers are allowed to return empty containers to their local retailer or redemption center for a five cent refund. Beverage manufacturers are responsible for the collection and recycling of their products.

An expanded Bottle Bill would extend a nickel deposit to water, juice, energy drink and sport drink bottles, which now represent over 30 percent of the beverages sold in Massachusetts and are the fastest growing segment of the beverage industry. The cost to manage these discarded containers is currently the responsibility of municipalities through collection of public waste receptacles and household trash and recycling programs.

MassDEP commissioned an analysis of the impact of an expanded Bottle Bill on municipal refuse and recycling costs and revenues. In calculating the impact, the study examined the following:

- **Avoided Collection Costs.** Expanding the Bottle Bill would remove a significant portion of beverage containers typically collected through trash and recycling programs and make the recycling of them the responsibility of manufacturers. The study estimated the annual cost savings through avoided waste and recycling collection costs at roughly \$4 to \$5 million.
- **Avoided Disposal Costs.** Since Bottle Bill recycling rates are more than double the rate achieved through traditional municipal recycling programs, significant amounts of beverage containers currently going in municipal trash would be diverted to recycling through the Bottle Bill system. This results in a significant reduction in trash disposal costs. The study estimated avoided disposal costs to be \$482,000 to \$2,334,000 annually.
- **Net Recycling Revenues.** An estimated 18,000 tons of beverage containers would be diverted from municipal recycling efforts and recycled through the Bottle Bill system. Communities typically receive some revenue from the sale of these materials. The study estimated these revenues to be nearly \$900,000 annually.
- **Litter Abatement.** Additionally, the study estimated that an expanded Bottle Bill would save Massachusetts municipalities over \$500,000 annually in avoided litter collection costs.

The table below summarizes the study's conclusion that an expansion of the Bottle Bill would save municipalities between \$4.2 and \$6.9 million annually in litter abatement, avoided collection, and disposal/recycling costs. "Low" and "High" figures represent two ranges of anticipated redemption under an expanded Bottle Bill.

	Benefits / (Costs)	Low (\$)	High (\$)
1	Avoided Collection Costs	\$4,214,000	\$5,033,000
2	Net Recycling Revenues	(\$899,000)	(\$899,000)
3	Avoided Disposal Costs	\$482,000	\$2,334,000
4	Litter Abatement	\$500,000	\$500,000
	Subtotal:	\$4,297,000	\$6,968,000

For additional information, contact:

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*The information contained in this fact sheet references DSM Environmental's 2009 study, "Analysis of the Impact of an Expanded Bottle Bill on Municipal Refuse and Recycling Costs and Revenues," available on request.

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Produced by the
Bureau of Waste Prevention,
August 2009.

Printed on recycled paper.

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