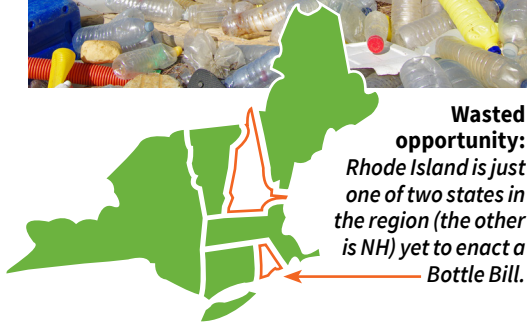


# RI Needs a Bottle Bill

*Bottle bills reduce litter, prevent plastic pollution and improve recycling*



**Wasted opportunity:** Rhode Island is just one of two states in the region (the other is NH) yet to enact a Bottle Bill.

**The Problem:** Beverage containers are littering our neighborhoods, clogging storm drains, polluting our waterways and piling up in the landfill, which is estimated to reach capacity by 2040 if we don't change course. Unfortunately, curbside recycling is not effectively capturing beverage containers, and many of those that do make it onto a recycling truck actually end up in the landfill or are “downcycled.”

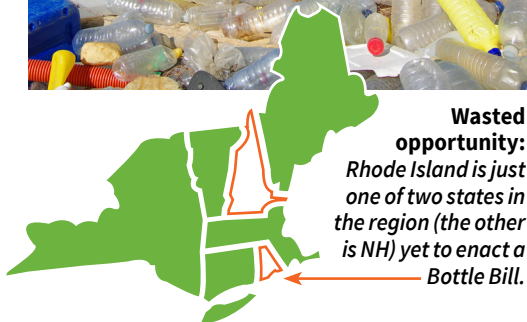
Despite decades of anti-littering efforts and an increase in access to single-stream recycling in the state, **litter and marine debris continue to be a persistent and growing environmental problem**, both along the shore and in our inland communities. At the same time, **our recycling system is failing** to meet the state's recycling targets, and tons of recyclable beverage containers are buried in the landfill each year. In short: **What we're doing isn't working. We need to do better.**

**The Solution: a RI Bottle Bill.** Luckily, ten states, including our neighbors in Massachusetts and Connecticut, are currently modeling a solution: a recycling refund system, or “bottle bill.” Decades of experience from these states — and countries around the world — show that these programs both reduce litter and improve recycling:

- A study by the Container Recycling Institute of the effects of “bottle bills” when first adopted in the U.S. showed a consistent **70-84% reduction in beverage container litter** and a 34-47% reduction in total litter.
- Recycling rates for glass, aluminum, and PET plastic in states with recycling refund systems are **more than double** the rates in states without one.

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## About the Bottle Bill

The RI bottle bill is informed by decades of experience with recycling refund systems around the country and world.

In states with a bottle bill, customers pay a small deposit on each beverage container they purchase which is returned to them when they bring the empty bottle back to a participating retailer or redemption center to be recycled. These recycling refund systems are a form of **producer responsibility**, as the costs of handling the empty containers are paid by the beverage companies or distributors in the form of a handling fee. A strong bottle bill incorporates:

- **A 10-cent refundable deposit**
- Inclusion of **all types of beverage containers** (even “nips”), making it easier for consumers and maximizing the material captured
- **Convenient return options** for consumers including “return to retail” and independent redemption centers
- **Reinvestment** of any unclaimed deposits back into the container redemption and recycling system
- **Strong government oversight** with clear standards and performance targets

In response to organizing efforts by grassroots supporters and strong support from legislative allies, the RI General Assembly created a special legislative study commission to more closely examine bottle bill programs in other states and countries and to develop a system that will work well for our state. Rhode Island has an opportunity to create a high-performing system that reduces litter, prevents pollution and improves our recycling system.

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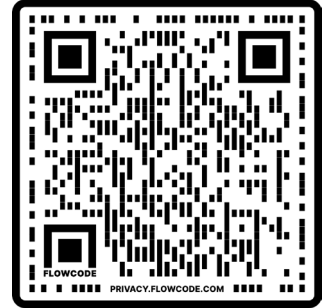
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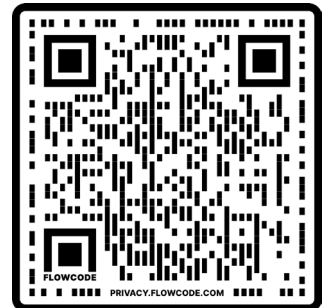
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