

Need and Opportunity for Change

As we mobilize to address climate change, ocean pollution, pressure on supply chains, and the US's overconsumption, circular economy tools — like bottle bills, and the deposit return systems they establish — become increasingly important.

Deposit return systems are cost-effective, enjoy widespread public support and they work. Modern, high-performing deposit return systems can more quickly advance circular economy principles and practices in ways that curbside recycling, even if enhanced, cannot.

The Northeast states targeted in this initiative present a unique opportunity to adopt modern deposit return systems immediately. Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont have already laid the groundwork for successful deposit return systems, and can make changes now. These states are also particularly impacted by global warming and plastic waste along extensive

coastlines and waterways — both issues that expanded and modernized DRS address. Litter is a major problem far beyond unsightliness. Plastic leakage along our coasts and in our waterways poses a threat to public health, with research showing that microplastics in air, water and food impact human and fetal neurological and physical development.³

Deploying improvements in these states will have an immediate environmental and economic benefit, and will act as a model for other states across the US.

Modernized deposit return systems address the real and urgent need for quality recycled material. Corporate producers have made ambitious commitments to use more recycled materials in their packaging. At the same time, China's 2017 National Sword policy, which effectively put an end to plastic scrap imports, has resulted in increased costs and logistical challenges for municipal recycling programs. Without better supplies of beverage container materials, the industry's overreliance on carbon-intensive virgin material will continue, resulting in an increase in net material consumption.