



# Deposit Return Systems: A Tool for Effective Recycling

Deposit return systems (DRSs) are effective. First adopted in the US in the late 1970s, deposit return systems require consumers to pay a deposit on any container they purchase that is included in the system. The deposit is then fully refunded when the container is returned. The result of this simple recycling incentive has been higher container recycling rates, higher-quality material for recycling or reuse, and reduced litter.

- Recycling rates for glass, aluminum, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic in states with a DRS are more than double the rates in states without one<sup>12</sup>, and their litter rates are 30% lower.<sup>13</sup>
- Within bottle bill states, recycling rates for containers covered by bottle bill requirements are significantly higher than recycling rates for containers that are excluded. The trends in glass recycling are particularly notable, with recycling rates for included glass containers surging to more than six times higher than rates for excluded containers.<sup>14</sup>
- A study of the effects of DRSs when first adopted in the US showed **a consistent 70-84% reduction in beverage container litter and a 34-47% reduction in total litter.**<sup>15</sup>