



Spotlighting the Northeast

This analysis focuses on the Northeast because five states in this region have already laid the groundwork for successful deposit return systems. Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont enacted their DRSs between 1976 and 1982, and have achieved return rates ranging from 44% to 84% for containers included in the systems. At the same time, outdated features in these systems result in the landfilling, incineration, or littering of more than 14 billion glass, plastic and aluminum beverage containers per year in these states at present. The DRS concept is familiar and proven in Northeast states, which can enact change in the immediate future.

Modernizing the systems across the Northeast region will enable each of these states to elevate their redemption rates to 90% or more, satisfy increasing demand for quality materials, intercept additional materials currently excluded from their systems, and serve as a nationwide model for other states to enhance their existing systems or adopt new DRSs based on high-performance principles.

The Northeast is particularly impacted by both climate change¹⁷ and plastic waste along its extensive coastlines and waterways — both issues that expanded and modernized DRSs directly address.