Environment / Climate

DRS modernization positively impacts the environment in two primary ways: by diverting usable materials from final disposal and by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of the beverage industry.

INCREASED DIVERSION OF RECYCLABLE MATERIALS

Based on Reloop's extensive research of deposit return systems worldwide, the 10 high-performance principles, and the analytical model that were developed based on that research, every targeted state would see an increase in the return rate for beverage containers under a modernized DRS. Massachusetts and Connecticut would see the most significant increases, from a baseline redemption rate in the 40% range to 90%.

Of all container types, plastic cartons and nips (small, single-serving liquor bottles) would see the greatest increases, including a jump from 0% recycled to 89% for nips — equivalent to more than 70 million individual nips, which are not currently included in the region's DRSs and are one of the most commonly littered items. In terms of increased beverage container recycling, plastic is estimated to see the largest increase, with an additional 5.9 billion units being recycled; aluminum and glass follow with an additional 1.9 billion and 1.4 billion containers. By weight, about 463,000 tons of additional material will be diverted from landfill and recycled across the Northeast region each year.

Nips

Small, single-serving liquor bottles often referred to as "nips" are one of the hardest beverage containers to recycle. As one of the most littered beverage containers, nips are a crucial addition to the deposit return system scope. However, often, the current infrastructure is not equipped to handle the small containers. Placing a deposit value on nips not only incentivizes individuals to return their containers but also encourages infrastructure to adapt to a now valuable container.