



REDUCED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Manufacturing beverage containers from raw materials is an energy-intensive process. To the extent that raw materials can be replaced with quality recycled materials, environmental impact and financial burden decreases.

Reloop’s new research shows that modernizing the DRS in each state will result in the reduction of 556,800 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions across the region. While the state’s GHG inventory parameters might not enable them to count these against their climate goals, the largest carbon reductions were associated with the most populated states: Massachusetts (with 138,000 metric tons reduced per year) and New York City (with 224,000 metric tons reduced per year). The increase in transportation emissions associated with increased redemptions (highest in Massachusetts at 18 metric tons) will be many times offset by the reduced emissions from using recycled rather than virgin materials. The total carbon savings across the five Northeast states would be as high as 557,000 metric tons of CO₂ annually. This is the equivalent of over 121,000 cars being taken off the road each year.²⁹

Healthy and Just Communities

The health impacts from environmental impacts associated with the supply chain for single-use packaging — in particular from the production, disposal, and littering of plastic — are disproportionately borne by low-income communities and communities of color and are therefore a major environmental justice issue³⁰. High-performing DRSs must not only avoid negative impacts but also deliver improved economic, social, and public health conditions.

As described further in the “Equitable Transitioning” section below, revenues from unclaimed deposits create an opportunity for targeted, neighborhood-driven programs and improvements that can be used to deliver meaningful improvements in quality of life for everyone and some vulnerable populations in particular.

In addition to the impacts outlined below, reducing the volume of containers produced from virgin materials may also have an impact on the toxic emissions from manufacturing facilities, which disproportionately affect lower-income communities. However, assessing this impact is beyond the scope of the current research and will require further study.