

Modernized DRSs solve a host of the challenges faced by the recycling sector and also can act as a critical stepping stone away from single-use containers.

The two most important components of a refillables system for consumers are that it be convenient and financially rewarding. For producers, getting as many refillable containers returned as possible is key. DRSs establish a common infrastructure for containers to be returned for either recycling or refilling without any additional effort from consumers or cost from producers.

In February 2022, Coca-Cola announced a global goal to reach 25% reusable packaging by volume by 2030. Commitments such as this from producers are welcome, yet designing for refill is only the first step in the journey. Making sure refillables go out into the world and then come back for cleaning and refilling over and over requires investment, planning, and, most critically, an easy and effective refillables collection system, which DRS is uniquely suited to deliver. With modern DRSs, the consumer does not have to distinguish between returning a container for recycling or refill; that distinction is made instead by the back-end handling systems. This makes return simple for the user, who is motivated to get their cash back. Producers, meanwhile, benefit from a collection system uniquely equipped to deliver high volumes of quality material. Both behind the scenes and from a user perspective, high-performing DRS enable a robust refillable container marketplace and guarantee that valuable resources are reused, not discarded.

