

## IOWA'S BOTTLE BILL

### LITTER REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

Iowa's bottle deposit law, popularly known as the "Bottle Bill," passed in 1978 and includes all carbonated and alcoholic beverage containers. The program is self-supported and does not rely on taxes or unfunded mandates. Its impact is both environmental and economic. Here are some facts about the environmental impacts of the law through litter reduction and recycling:

#### HAS THE BOTTLE BILL REDUCED LITTER?

In 1980, two years after the Bottle Bill took effect, the Iowa Department of Transportation conducted a survey to determine the impact on litter. These findings imply that the new law expanded Iowans' consciousness beyond the value of recycling bottles and cans to an understanding of the importance of reducing litter and increasing recycling generally:

- Decrease in beverage container litter..... **77%<sup>a</sup>**
- Decrease in total litter..... **38%<sup>a</sup>**

#### HOW MUCH DO IOWANS RECYCLE?

- Number of beverage containers redeemed for deposit out of 1.9 billion sold..... **1.7 billion<sup>b</sup>**
- Empty for-deposit containers returned per person in Iowa..... **575<sup>b</sup>**
- Sales of drinks introduced since Bottle Bill passage that are not subject to the law..... **15%<sup>c</sup>**

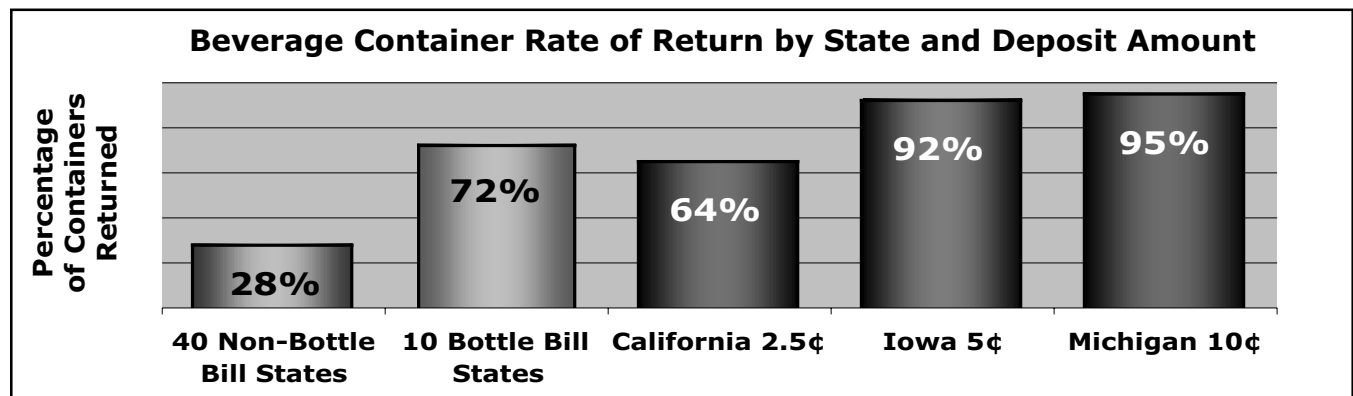
#### REDEEMABLE DEPOSIT & RECYCLING, IOWA VS. OTHER STATES

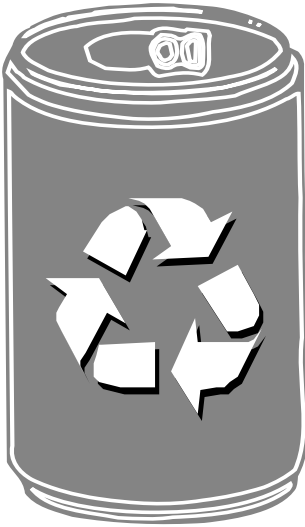
In the average bottle-bill state, beverage containers are 2 1/2 times as likely to be recycled as are containers in no-deposit states.

- Percentage of beverage containers returned in 10 states with deposits..... **72%<sup>d</sup>**
- Percentage of beverage containers returned in 40 states without deposits..... **28%<sup>d</sup>**

#### HIGHER DEPOSIT = BETTER RETURN RATES

- Percentage of beverage containers returned in **California (2.5-cent deposit)**..... **64%<sup>e</sup>**
- Percentage of beverage containers returned in **Iowa (5-cent deposit)**..... **92%<sup>d</sup>**
- Percentage of beverage containers returned in **Michigan (10-cent deposit)**..... **95%<sup>e</sup>**



**Notes and Sources:**

- a. Iowa Department of Transportation, Highway Division. April 1980. "Litter Survey".
- b. Iowa Recycling Association. January 2005. *I! Recycle*. Available online at <http://www.iowarecycles.org/jan05bottlebill.pdf>
- c. Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "Bottle Bill Frequently Asked Questions". Available online at <http://www.iowadnr.com/waste/recycling/bottlefaq.html>
- d. Iowa Recycling Association. January 2005. *I! Recycle*. Available online at <http://www.iowarecycles.org/jan05bottlebill.pdf>
- e. Businesses and Environmentalists Allied for Recycling. 1999. "Understanding beverage Container Recycling: A Value Chain Assessment". Available online at <http://www.globalgreen.org/BEAR/Projects/index.html#files>

## The Iowa Policy Project

Founded in 2000, The Iowa Policy Project is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization based in Mount Vernon, with its principal office in Iowa City. IPP reports cover a wide range of topics of concern to the citizens of Iowa. These reports are made available to the public on the web at [www.iowapolicyproject.org](http://www.iowapolicyproject.org) <<http://www.iowapolicyproject.org>>. Some also are offered at the website of the Iowa Fiscal Partnership, [www.iowafiscal.org](http://www.iowafiscal.org) <<http://www.iowafiscal.org>>.

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