

Trash Talk:

Updating Bottle Bills for Cleaner Rivers



Connecticut River
Conservancy



Why are we involved?

2020 Source to Sea Cleanup
10,654 Beverage Containers

3,036 Plastic Bottles

3,149 Aluminum Cans

2,074 Glass Bottles

2,395 Nips



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What is a “Bottle Bill”?

A bottle bill is a law that

- Requires distributors and retailers to collect a minimum refundable deposit, usually 5-10 cents on certain beverage containers
- Creates a privately-funded collection infrastructure for beverage containers
- Makes producers and consumers responsible for their packaging waste



What is the Origin of Bottle Bills?

- In the 50's and 60's, refillable 'deposit' bottles were replaced by throwaway, no-deposit beverage containers that created litter and wasted resources.



- A solution was to put a mandatory deposit on beverage containers to provide an incentive to recycle and a disincentive to litter.

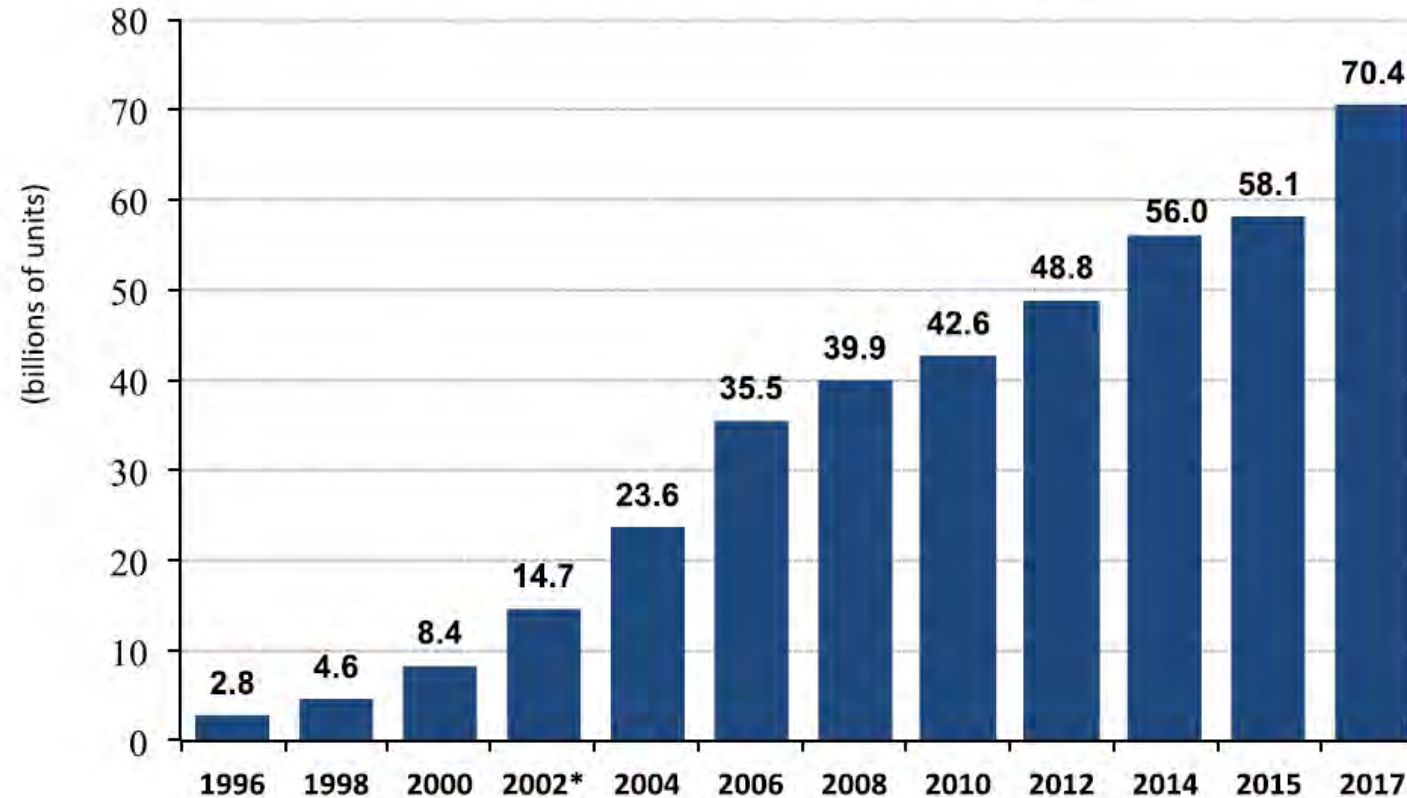
Why Beverage Containers?

- On the go - the industry estimates that one third of all soft drinks sold are consumed away from home
- They are often littered.
- They consume enormous amounts of energy in the manufacturing process.
- Greenhouse gas emissions can be avoided by recycling beverage containers rather than manufacturing new ones.
- They comprise significant volume in the waste stream.



PET plastic water bottles are *the* primary source of beverage sales growth

U.S. PET Plastic Bottled Water Sales, 1996-2017



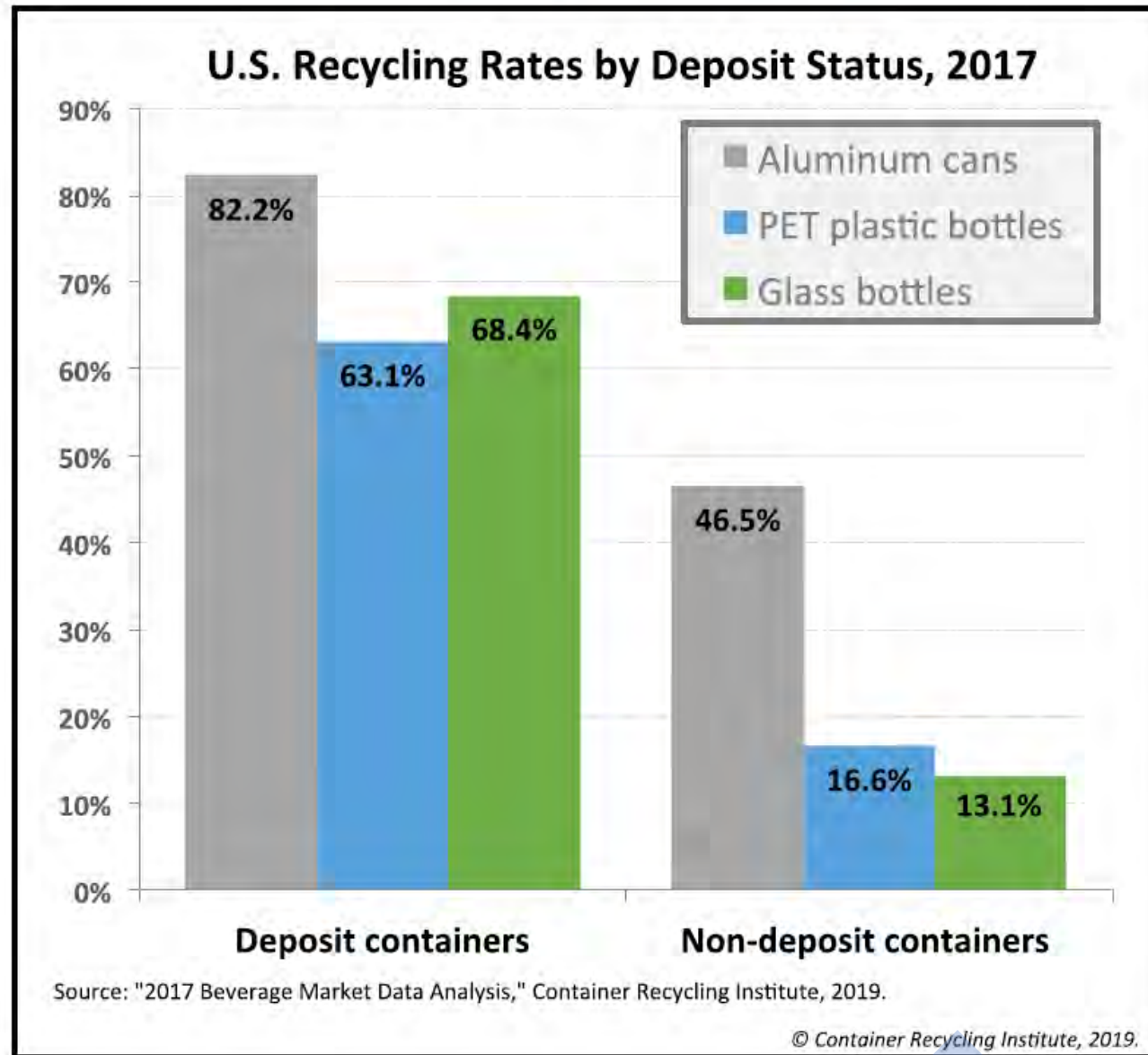
* Defined as domestic, non-sparkling water packaged in PET plastic, in sizes of 1 gallon and less. Prior to 2015, excludes flavored, enhanced and sweetened waters (3.2 billion units in 2014). Derived from Beverage Marketing Corporation data, 2002-2017.

Benefits of deposit systems:

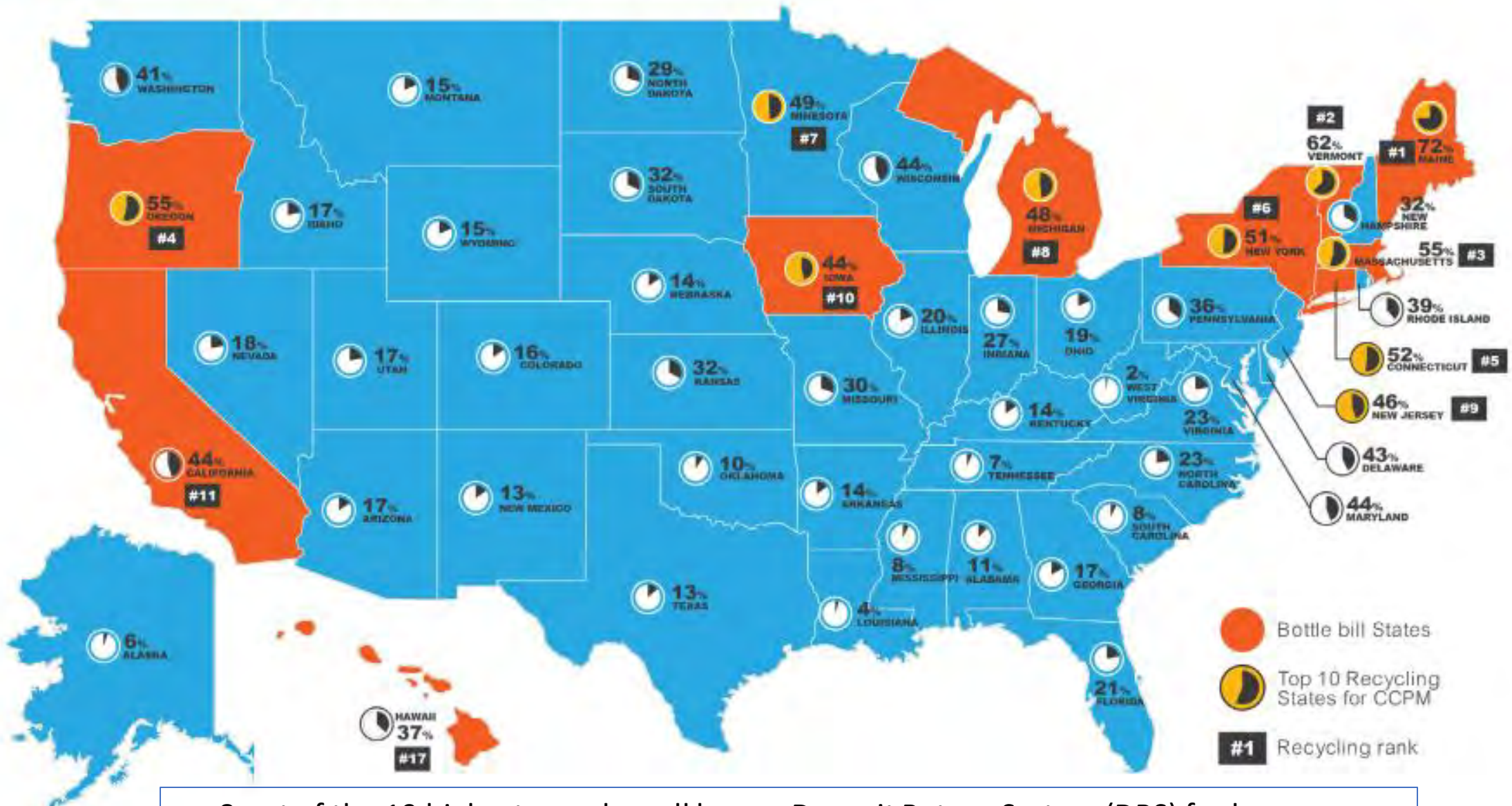
- Deposit redemption incentive produces high recycling rates: 58-95% for beverage containers
- Produce clean recycled materials for manufacturing
- Create jobs and new businesses that can't be outsourced overseas
- Shift end of life costs for used beverage containers to producers responsible for the waste
- Reduces litter and pollution
- Reduces energy use and greenhouse gases



Container Deposits are the *Rock Stars* of Recycling

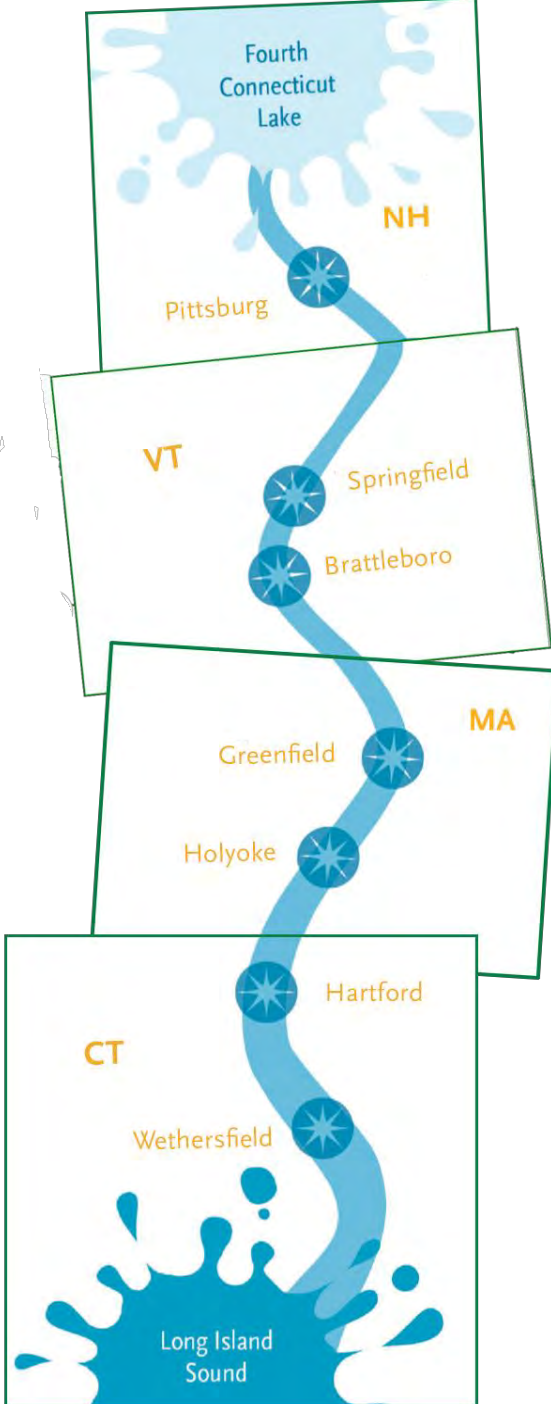


STATE-BY-STATE OVERVIEW OF CCPM RECYCLING RATES LISTED ACCORDING TO CCPM RECYCLING RANK (EXCLUDING CARDBOARD/BOXBOARD)



8 out of the 10 highest recyclers all have a Deposit Return System (DRS) for beverage containers, commonly known as a “bottle bill.”

State-by-State: Connecticut



- Bottle Bill introduced in 1978
- Recycling rate = 52% in 2018, redemption rate 44% in 2020
- Update in 2021 to **10¢ per container by 2024**, and **expanded** this list to include: juices, teas, iced coffees, sports drinks, energy drinks, and other noncarbonated beverage containers by 2023
- Handler fees paid to redemption centers will increase from 1.5 and 2 ¢ to between **2.5 and 3.5¢**
- Does not cover liquor and wine bottles, including 'nips'. Stewardship organization controlled by the beverage industry with no measurable targets or public input

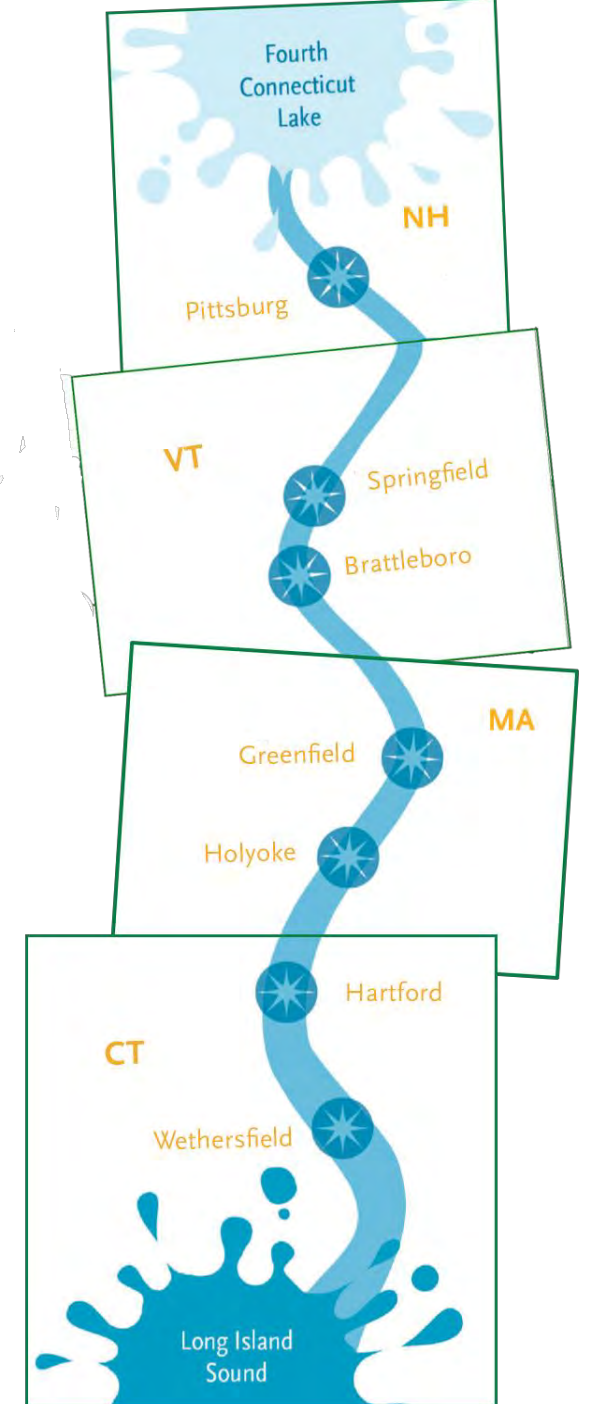
State-by-State: Massachusetts

IN PLACE NOW

- Implemented in January 1983
- Deposit amount: 5¢
- Beverages covered: Beer, malt, carbonated non-alcoholic drinks
- Handling fee: 3.25¢ at redemption centers, 2.25¢ at retailers
- Unredeemed deposits: General fund (originally it went to recycling programs in the state; this changed under Gov. Mitt Romney)
- Return rate: 50-71% 2010-2019, trending downward
- Recycling rate: 52% (common containers & packaging materials, 2018)

Proposed UPDATES: H.3289/S.2149: An Act to Expand the Bottle Bill

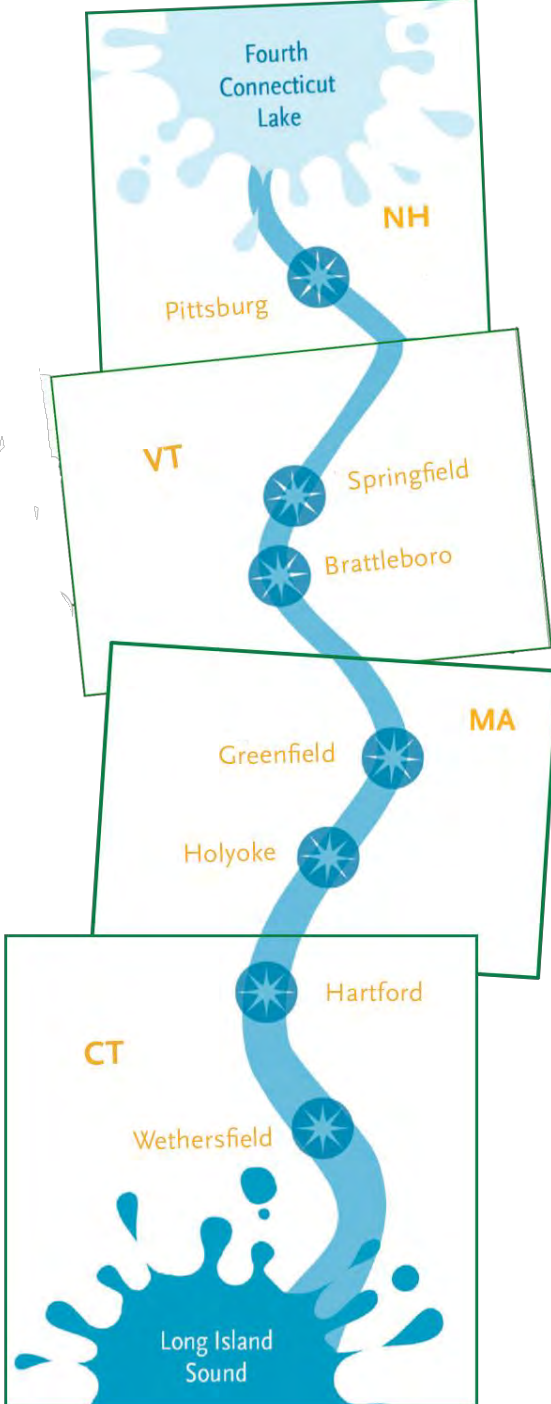
- Lauren Fernandez from the Conservation Law Foundation will be providing more details on this bill later in this program



State-by-State: New Hampshire

IN PLACE NOW – NOT MUCH!

- NO BOTTLE BILL - last legislative attempt in 2014, previously attempted in 2011
- Recycling rate = 32% in 2018, lowest in New England
- NH Beverage Association, the Beverage Distributors of New Hampshire Association and the New Hampshire Grocers Association funds "NH The Beautiful" - a non-profit that provides limited support for recycling efforts and litter cleanups.
- NH should join the surrounding states and most of Canada and implement a bottle bill.



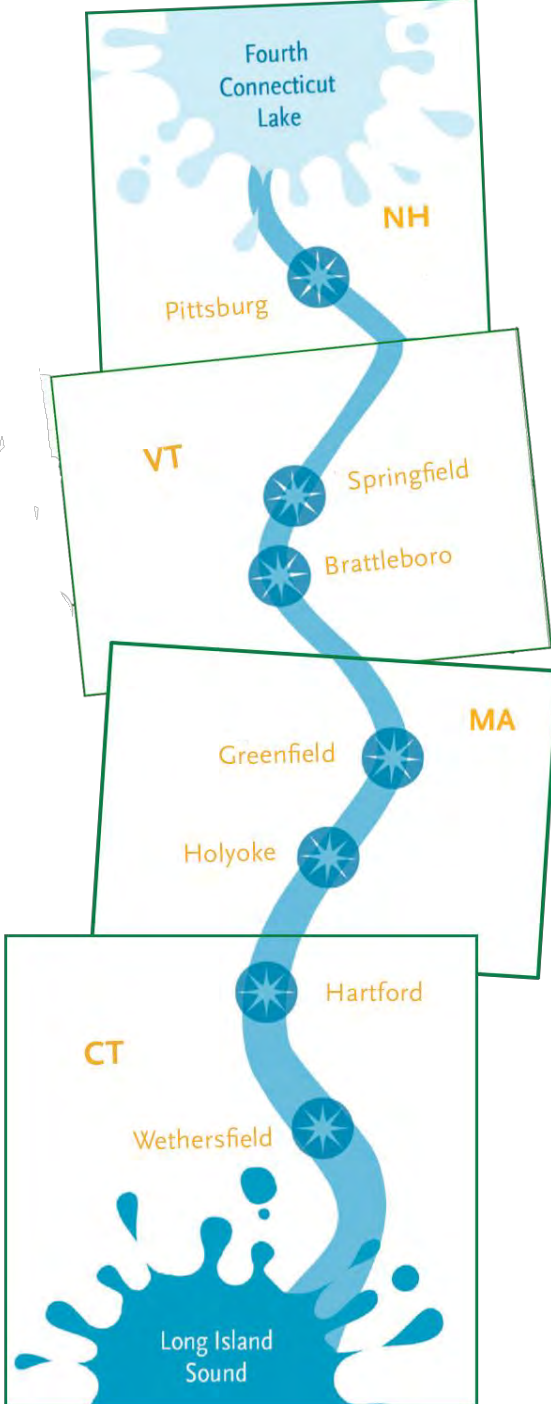
State-by-State: Vermont

IN PLACE NOW

- Implemented in July 1973
- Deposit amount: 5¢; 15¢ for liquor bottles over 50 mL
- Beverages covered: Beer, malt, carbonated soft drinks, mixed wine drinks; liquor
- Recycling rate = 62% in 2018, redemption rate = 77% in 2020
- Handling fee: 4¢ for brand-sorted containers and 3.5¢ for commingled brands
- Unredeemed deposits: As of October 1, 2019 - unclaimed deposits are the property of the State and are use on clean water programs

Proposed updates: H175 introduced in January 2020

- passed the House with some changes; currently in Senate Rules committee
- expanded to include water bottles, wine bottles, and containers for all noncarbonated and carbonated drinks, except for milk products
- Initially increased deposit from 5¢ to 10¢ – this was amended back to 5¢ with House vote
- Removed min size limit for liquor bottles which will have 15¢ deposit
- increase the handling fee for non-commingled containers from four cents to five cents per container.



A Zero Waste Future

Lauren Fernandez, Policy Analyst

Zero Waste Project at the Conservation Law Foundation



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Bottle Bill Expansion in Massachusetts

What's happening?

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An Act to Expand the Bottle Bill

- Increases deposit fee to 10 cents
- Expands types of containers for redemption
- Saves money for cities and towns

Where's the Bill?

- Sponsored by Representative Decker
- In the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy
- Public hearing in September 2021

How can you support?

- Ask your legislator to support the Bottle Bill expansion
- Share with your networks, gain their support
- Tweet, email, call!

Zero Waste Project at CLF



Research, law, & market

Develop & advocate for zero waste legislation

Environmental justice lens

Presenters

Jim McCullough, VT State Representative, jmccullough@leg.state.vt.us

Lauren Fernandez, Zero Waste Policy Analyst, Conservation Law Foundation, lfernandez@clf.org

CRC River Stewards:

CT Kelsey Wentling, kwentling@ctriver.org

MA Andrea Donlon, adonlon@ctriver.org

NH/VT Kathy Urffer, kurffer@ctriver.org



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