



Legislation Summary:

An Act to expand the bottle bill

Initial bill number(s): [H.3690/S.2104](#) (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsors: Representative Marjorie Decker/Senator Cynthia Creem

What the bill does, why LWVMA supports or opposes it, and the League position relative to this bill.

This bill:

- Expands the list of beverage containers with deposits for recycling;
- Increases the deposit from 5¢ to 10¢;
- Makes redeeming deposits easier.

Why LWVMA Supports this bill:

Six million tons of waste are disposed of in MA annually. Over 94 thousand tons of this waste consists of beverage containers that litter parks, beaches, waterways and streets. LWVMA supported the original bottle bill enacted in 1982. A lot has changed in the beverage container world and society at large since then. The League has continued its support of this common sense legislation advocating for recent legislative efforts to update the bill to match current realities. While the 1982 law was appropriate to the time and type of single use beverages prevalent 40 years ago, it is not appropriate for the huge increase in single use containers on the market today. Neither is the 40-year-old, nickel deposit. The “new” class of containers includes water bottles, iced coffees and teas, vitamin drinks, and assorted other beverages, on the scene for several decades. Only 42% of beverage containers in MA are covered by the 40-year-old bottle bill.

In addition to the issue of litter, discarded containers are also a waste of resources and energy, a critical factor as we face the threat of accelerating climate change and the Commonwealth’s commitment to achieving 100% net zero emissions by 2050. Plastic bottles are made from fossil fuels and do not reflect the life-cycle cost of the associated intensive and polluting extraction, transportation and processing involved in their production. Only 9% of plastic bottles are recycled. The bulk of the 3.4 billion plastic beverage containers purchased in Massachusetts annually end up in incinerators and landfills to contaminate our water, air and soil. New uses are being found for recycled glass which is 100% recyclable without any loss in quality. Adding just 10% recycled glass content to new glass containers would reduce CO2 emissions from that process. Recycling aluminum, the most valuable of the recyclable materials, saves 90% of the energy used in manufacturing new aluminum.

While we grapple with the growing issue of waste in the US, it makes sense to do what we can to strengthen recycling via a stronger redemption system.

LWV Position relevant to support of this bill:

From 2022-2024 LWV Impact on Issues:

Waste Management, p. 99

The League supports:

- Policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.
- Policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage, and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes in order to protect public health and air, water, and land resources.
- Planning and decision-making processes that recognize suitable solid and hazardous waste as potential resources.