What happens when we don’t recycle?

-In Minnesota on average 142,000 tons of beverage containers are thrown in the trash each year! (6)

-In 2006 the U.S wasted 141 billion beverage containers. Reproducing that amount of containers would emit almost 5 million tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This is the same as what 3.3 million cars emit per year. (1)

Those wasted containers don’t only end up in landfills and incinerators they also end up on beaches, parkland and roadsides, streams, lakes, rivers and oceans causing injury to humans, domestic animals, wildlife and marine life. (1)

If that doesn’t motivate you to recycle, a bottle deposit bill has been proposed in Minnesota that simply makes cents.

Take action for environmental justice!

Call your senator and congressman to tell them that you support the MN deposit refund bill!

Representative Jim Davine- 651-296-0173
Senator Patricia Torres Ray- 651.296.4274
Representative Bobby Champion- 651-296-8659
Senator Linda Higgins- 651.296.9246

Minneapolis Congressman Keith Ellison- 612-522-1212
St. Paul Congresswoman Betty McCollum- 651-224-9191
Senator Amy Klobuchar- 612-727-5220
Senator Al Franken- 651-221-1016

Support the MN bottle deposit bill!
The adverse affects of wasting reusable materials fall disproportionately on poor people and people of color in the United States. Studies have shown that communities populated by low income groups and people of color are not only already exposed to higher levels of pollution than the rest of the population, but they would also be the first to feel the effects of global climate change. It’s simple: the more people recycle the less toxic pollutants and greenhouse gases are emitted in the atmosphere creating brand new materials. If recycling is increased poor communities and people of color would benefit in more ways than one.

Benefits – Its Common Cents!

- Increases Recycling Rates = Less waste and litter in our urban, rural, and recreational areas!(1)
- Has recovery rates of 66 – 96% for beverage containers.
- Creates Jobs And New Businesses.(1)
- Conserves Energy And Natural Resources.
  • Prevents the pollution created from manufacturing new containers.
  • Reduces Global Warming Green house Gases(4)
- Shifts costs associated with beverage containers to those who waste them. = motivates people to not waste in the first place. (1)

What is a Bottle Bill?

- It’s a law that has been passed in 11 states that...
  1. Requires distributors and retailers to collect a 5 or 10 cent refundable deposit.
  2. Creates a privately funded infrastructure for beverage containers.
  3. Makes producers and consumers responsible for their waste.(1)

Support Minnesota’s Bottle Bill!

In April 2011 the Deposit Refund Bill was proposed in the Minnesota House of Congress. The bill would set up a beverage refund of 10 cents on metal cans, glass or plastic bottles up to 3 liters(6). We currently have a 35% recycling rate in Minnesota. With this program that rate will most likely be over 80 percent. Our border state Iowa has had a 5 cent deposit on beverage containers since 1979. Their recycling rate is 86 percent for all containers(8). Proponents of the bill say this program will not only increase recycling rates but the beverages wasted would raise $90 million for the state(6). These funds, left over from those who choose not to recoup their 10 cents on their beverage purchases, will subsequently be used to clean our local environment. It would also take a chunk out of the $200 million that the state spends each year on the disposing of container waste. Also, with more containers being re used, there won’t be as many “virgin” materials produced. Studies have shown that creating these new materials is not only less cost efficient, but it also releases more greenhouse gases and toxic pollutants into the atmosphere (4). Although Joan Archer, president of the Minnesota Beverage Association, which represents all non-alcoholic bottlers in the state, is not in favor of the bill because he said that it would add extra costs and inconvenience onto consumers (8) other people argue that one person’s inconvenience can become another’s opportunity. A bottle deposit program would set up the possibility for schools and local organizations to raise money through can and bottle drives, it would also provide an opportunity for those who are struggling the most to utilize wasted bottles and cans in order to receive some extra money that they need desperately.

Recycling is An Environmental Justice Issue.

In 2007 the Minnesota Pollution Control agency wrote: "The current recycling system is missing major energy and greenhouse gas reduction opportunities with beverage containers, starting with aluminum cans.” (7) Low income earners are shown to benefit most from the bottle deposit program. Studies have shown that bottle deposits are utilized most by those who earn the least. Since many benefit from recycling beverage containers that they hadn’t originally purchased it ultimately increases the income of low wage earners. It also has shown to provide viable employment for those earning less that $5,000 a year, since one study found that deposit money made up around 10% of their annual income. (2) Based on the fact that bottle deposits are known to increase overall recycling rates there is a good chance that our urban impoverished communities and recreational areas will be much cleaner. Many poor urban areas are often times disregarded by government cleaning agencies, many times these areas will accumulate garbage without their help. A bottle deposit program will either give a good incentive to those who would like to clean up their communities, or prevent litter from being accumulated in the first place.

With increased recycle rates the program has helped to clean up urban areas not to mention decrease the amount of waste in dump sites that pollute the area. These dump sites are more often than not located near or in poor communities. Also another secondary effect of this program has been a decrease in crime rates in urban areas. One study “show(ed) that city level petty crime rates in bottle law states are on average 11% lower than city-level petty crime rates in non-bottle law states.”(3)

By implementing the bottle deposit program in Minneapolis we will directly create more equity in our communities by increasing the income of the poor. With the 10 cent deposit added to all cans, glass bottles, and plastic bottles there is a good chance that it can be a solid source of income for those who most need it.

Did You Know??

New hydroelectric dams are often built to produce electricity for aluminum manufacturing. These dams have displaced many indigenous peoples in many regions of the world. If we recycle our aluminum cans there will be no need to build these new dams.(4)