

Comment Report

HF 814

A bill for an act relating to the redemption of beverage containers, providing civil penalties, and including effective date provisions.(Formerly HSB 252; See HF 872, HF 892.)

Subcommittee Members: Lundgren-CH, Isenhardt, Nordman

Date: 04/12/2021

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: House Lounge

Name: Gary Funkhouser

Comment: Our local youth have received nearly \$190,000 by sorting donations from our community every two weeks. Each 2 week period a youth group receives the funds earned. The Optimist have constructed a can kennel with a covered deck and a large cage for the donations. We are fortunate to have a recycling center from Glenwood Iowa pick up the bagged and boxed donations. Several 4H clubs in our area have earned thousands of dollars over the many years we have had the local can kennel. Other groups such as boy and girl scouts high school athletic teams, church youth groups, high school cheerleaders, dance teams, junior Optimist clubs etc. have profited greatly. PLEASE SUPPORT ANY ACTIVITY TO HELP CONTINUE THIS PROGRAM. Thank you!!!

Name: Pam Mackey-Taylor

Comment: I encourage you to oppose HF814, changes to the bottle deposit law. This bill would gut Iowa's Bottle Deposit Law. Iowa's Bottle Redemption program is wildly successful and popular. The changes being proposed will make it less convenient for people to recycle and the result will be more litter in our rivers, lakes, and ditches. It is not convenient to require a consumer to travel 20 or 30 miles roundtrip from a grocery store or convenience store to a redemption center in order to redeem empty cans and bottles. Furthermore, by making recycling inconvenient and almost impossible, people will give up on recycling and will lose their nickels. That is an automatic increase in the price of the beverage. If it costs more to travel to the redemption center than the return of the deposit, then it is not cost effective to return the bottles and cans. If the redemption center is not open at the times a person is free to stop by the redemption center, then the person loses their nickels. We should be encouraging the recycling, not discouraging it. When people cannot conveniently return their empty containers, it is like adding a 5 cent tax to every beverage container. With a coupon, I recently purchased some pop for slightly over 29 cents per bottle. If I can't get my nickel back, then I am paying almost 17% in tax for that pop. One of the things you will hear is that the grocers do not want dirty containers in their stores. However, they are renting and storing dirty rug machines in the stores. Further they have inhouse pharmacies that are not walled off from the rest of the store. That encourages sick people to come into the stores and loiter, which puts everyone in the store at risk. The dealers should be encouraged to use their excess windfall from unredeemed bottles and cans to set up convenient ways to recycle, including reverse vending machines and including convenient kiosks close to the stores. I urge you to oppose HF814.

Name: Shawn Wagner

Comment: Many areas now have recycling programs. Just get rid of the redemption program, so we can use the recycling program. It would also stop people from shopping at grocery stores and liquor stores in other states to avoid paying deposits. By having

the redemption program, it adds unwanted costs and waste citizens time by going to a redemption center.

Name: Paula Vaughan

Comment: Legislators, I am writing to encourage you to include certain key elements in HF 814, the Bottle Bill. After 40 years it is time to update and upgrade the efficacy of this legislation to make it a winwin situation of all involved parties and the environment: Increase the deposit and handling fees by at least two cents and build in a cost of living automatic adjustment at timed intervals for a revenue stream that keeps pace with the times. Assign administration of the container deposit law to the Department of Revenue to track unclaimed deposits, and enforce the law (fines and collections). Proceeds could be used by retailers to purchase technologically improved equipment for returns. Some monies could also go to environmental programs within the state. Expand the types of beverages in the program to include those that use the same containers as allowed now. Make the distance for people to redeem containers doable, within 5 miles, preferably so they will use the service. Thank you for the time and energy you have put into working on this important bill.

Name: Rose Rennekamp

Comment: I think a bottle bill makes sense. It is an incentive for people to not litter our highways. However, if a retailer sells these bottles, they need to provide a redemption center onsite. It need not be "fancy" or attached to the store. Seniors and those without cars can't be expected to go 10 or 15 miles to a redemption center!

Name: Jay Freeman

Comment: Many people clean the environment and help supplement their income through this financial incentive to redeem cans, glass, and bottles. This is, in part, why there is less littering along Iowa roads than other nearby states. Keep the payment/reward piece to this bill!

Name: Aime Wichtendahl

Comment: Why do we need to do this song and dance every two years? The bottle bill is popular in Iowa. It reduces waste and incentivizes recycling. People want you to expand it, not gut the bill. Stop wasting our time with this nonsense and pass legislation which make Iowa a better place to live. Not a toxic waste dump of bad ideas.

Name: Gaylen Wobeter

Comment: Please expand the bottle redemption to include water, tea, juice and sports drinks. Please raise redemption and handling fees and tie them to the cost of living. Expanding the bottle bill for the 2020s is important to all Iowans who care about our environment. People need to be able to redeem their bottles and cans without a long drive. Thank you.

Name: Syndy Conger

Comment: Thank you for your attention to the bottle bill and your willingness to hold a meeting Monday, April 12, to address fees and penalties. Here are suggestions in order of importance (1 most important): 1. Double (at least) the handling fee to 2 cents. 3 cents would be even better. This will make program more attractive to more attractive for retailers and independent recycling businesses. 2. Increase the deposit fee. This will make the program more attractive to consumers, lower income collectors of roadside cans, and will keep more containers in the supply chain. 3. Assign the collection of data on unclaimed deposits and any penalties to the Department of Revenue. Collection of these monies should be as automatic and transparent as possible. 4. Dedicate the income from unclaimed deposits and any penalties to the recycling goal: offer grants to vendors to modernize their equipment and and to entrepreneurs to open recycling centers in areas with little or none. Thank

you!

Name: Jim Mart

Comment: Leave the bottle bill as is. It has kept our ditches and parks cleaner than states that don't have it.

Name: Angela Wolf

Comment: Keep nature beautiful by retaining bottle deposit.

Name: Dan Gall

Comment: I write in support of the bottle bill and encourage you to make it more convenient for consumers to participate. Retailers, even small retailers, can and should continue to collect recyclables for the convenience of retailers. If changes are made, those changes should be focused on making it easy and costeffective for retailers to participate. Thank you for your attention to this issue and our shared environment.

Name: Kristin Otoole

Comment: I oppose the redemption program, especially noted in the current pandemic, due to sanitary concerns. I support local recycling programs available in most communities.

Name: Terese Grant

Comment: It is past time to make improvements to Iowa's bottle bill. There definitely needs to be an increase in the handling fee as well as an increase in the deposit fee. It would be more appropriate to move data collection and civil penalties to the Department of Revenue rather than the DNR. Another improvement for the bottle bill would be to include all beverage containers. The people of Iowa deserve a bottle bill that continues to protect the environment and is at no cost to the taxpayers.

Name: Anita Christensen

Comment: Please oppose HF814 and retain Iowa's bottle bill. This program is popular and successful. It has worked to help keep many of these items out of nature. If anything, we should expand and upgrade this program to include other beverage containers and raise the redemption and handling fees.

Name: Anne Johnson

Comment: Please, please maintain the bottle bill!! I remember the days of garbage in parking lots, ditches, roadways. We must keep this motivation fir recycling and redeeming.

Name: Rosemary Kirlin

Comment: I am opposed to HF 814. Our current bottle bill may need improvement; specifically the bottle bill charge could be increased, even doubled, to make the cost of recycling more feasible for grocers & recyclers. Having a bottle bill that works for consumers & grocers & our environment is essential.. It is important that consumers be able to recycle bottles at our local grocers. Those of us who are disabled dont find going to recycling centers nearly as accessible as our local grocers. Our environment needs our cooperation to keep our world clean & habitable & recycling bottles is a small & very doable thing our citizens & grocers can do to our environment. We need to promote recycling not decrease recycling. I understand it will cost more. The cost is worth it. It is a small price to pay to get a cleaner environment & a more sustainable world. That is well worth it. We dont need to make our world meaner, more mercenary or bleaker. We need to look toward the future & make sure we all contribute to making a better future for all of us.

Name: Linda Schreiber

Comment: HF 814 (successor to HSB 252)Your efforts to develop a new bill are appreciated.

However, HF 814 is complicated and does not address concerns and future needs. The League of Women Voters of Iowa would prefer a clean bill that favors Iowa consumers over business. In addition to a requirement that consumers must drive to redeem, that we oppose, two primary issues are of concern: 1. The proposed bill does not provide indexing tied to a cost of living to create a deposit and/or handling fee adjustments at an appropriate time so a future Legislature and Iowans don't have to experience this uncomfortable process. 2. HF 814 does not propose moving the deposit fee system to a stateregulated agency or department out of the distributors' hands. A transparent deposit system would allow the state to regulate unclaimed deposits and offer grants from unclaimed deposits to a) retail for technology updates for reverse vending and b) environmental groups for environmental projects. While this bill does add penalties, it does not include water, tea, juice or sports drink containers to the statute. The "department" that has authority for the bill is not clearly identified. Must the Attorney General seek the Governor's permission for redress? Additionally, page 1 of the proposed bill indicates "... the dealer agent shall return the amount of the refund value to the consumer within a reasonable time." Lowincome individuals who collect empty containers to redeem deposit moneys may have immediate needs for the funds. Clubs and organizations collecting cans may face similar issues with a delayed payment system. HF 814 does not do enough to encourage redemption. If Iowans dont redeem, manufacturers may experience a supply chain shortage and will need to generate new containers using limited natural resources. A clean bottle bill should put Iowa consumers first. The current bottle bill is netneutral for taxpayers. A modernized bill should also be netneutral and should motivate customers to redeem by offering convenience. Three simple steps can create a fair bottle bill update for all: 1. Increase handling and deposit fees and tie increases to the cost of living to initiate an automatic adjustment at appropriate points to provide a timely revenuegenerating mechanism 2. Expand allowable containers redeemed to include water, tea, sports drinks, and juice that use the same materials as currently redeemable containers 3. Move the administration of the container deposit law to an Iowa department suited to follow the money and create procedures to track unclaimed deposits; enforce and collect fines; and establish a fund from the unclaimed deposits for granting purposes for: Retail operators to assist with the purchase of modern technology for redemption Environmental groups to assist with environmental projects and protection Recycling, while good, is not a complete solution too many rural communities do not have recycling programs. Adding more recycling programs is a cost for municipalities that are ultimately passed on to taxpayers. Redemption is critical to preserving natural resources and maintaining an adequate supply chain for manufacturers. Asking consumers to drive to redeem is an unreasonable burden especially because the current law requires all sellers to redeem. An updated bottle bill can be a winwin for everyone. Encouraging redemption over litter control provides grocers and redemption centers opportunities to operate fiscally sound operations while keeping containers in the supply chain and allowing containers to be used at the highest levels. Three simple steps will maintain costs within the industries affected, and wont raise or pass costs to taxpayers or consumers. Sincerely Linda Schreiber League of Women Voters of Iowa

Name: Susan Futrell

Comment: I opposed any changes to the bottle bill that would weaken its longtime positive impact in our state. Only changes that will strengthen the bill should be considered, and only if they do not involve tradeoffs that weaken it in other ways. I urge you to increase the handling fees and if necessary, the deposit amount; to reduce the distance of travel to redeem, and make it easier and more profitable to operate redemption centers; to enforce and track retailer redemptions; and to expand the deposit to include noncarbonated beverages, especially bottled water. As a college student, I was one of the researchers involved in compiling the data that supported passage of the original Bottle Bill. At the time, Iowa was a leader, at the forefront of what has now become a common approach. Our roads and ditches, our neighborhoods and alleys, and our public lands are all much cleaner and less littered, and the volume

of beverage containers moving through recycling waste streams is higher than without the bottle law. Nonprofit groups and people who pick up and redeem cans that others discard are keeping the deposit money circulating in local economies. The Bottle Law is supported by the majority of Iowans across the political spectrum. I strongly urge you to support, strengthen and preserve this important law. Thank you.

Name: Cathy Eisenhofer

Comment: It's time to modernize the 1978 bottle bill. Iowa's bottle bill passed in 1978 and was approved by the Governor on May 12, 1978. The Act became effective May 1, 1979, for beverage containers purchased from state liquor stores in Iowa, and on July 1, 1979, for all remaining containers covered by the Act..Raise the handling fee to 2 cents. 3 cents and/or tied to inflation would be even better. This will make the program more attractive to retailers and independent recycling businesses. .Increase the deposit fee. This will make the program more attractive to consumers, lower income collectors of roadside cans, and will keep more containers in the supply chain..Assign the collection of data on unclaimed deposits and any penalties to the Department of Revenue. Collection of these monies should be as automatic and transparent as possible..Dedicate the income from unclaimed deposits and any penalties to the recycling goal: offer grants to vendors to modernize their equipment and to entrepreneurs to open recycling centers in areas with little or none."

Name: Dan Millmeyer

Comment: Keep or strengthen the bottle bill. Expand to include other bottles (water, sports drinks, etc).

Name: Loro Bouska

Comment: I use these as a fundraiser for several organizations. Also, I have lived in Pennsylvania when they did NOT have a deposit on cans. The roads and sidewalks were filthy with litter, because without a deposit, why should anyone care enough to put it in a proper trash can?

Name: Debbie Klein

Comment: The bottle refund was originally supposed to reduce trash littering, increase recycling and overall help our planet. I have stopped my car, put it in park and gotten out to confront a teenager whom I saw drop a pop bottle on the ground and walk away. The older generation who knows why the \$.05 deposit is valued, we have failed to teach the younger generation why they pay for this. Now that we are wearing masks, the number of masks on the ground near the entrances of businesses is bountiful. If we are not going to use resources to promote, teach and explain the deposit program, then it is not worth having.

Name: Patty McGillin

Comment: Please consider expanding the bottle bill to include water, juice, tea and sport drinks. Also continue to provide convenient locations (near sellers of same) for redemption. Please continue this program that has served our state so well for so long! Thank you!

Name: Margaret Whiting

Comment: We need to make it convenient for people to recycle cans and bottles in Iowa. Increase the handling fee to 2 cents, so that redemption centers can survive, and Iowa will have more of them. I usually have to wait in line so long that I end up giving my cans to the other people waiting in line. The redemption centers need more funds to hire more people. Also, increase the deposit fee and expand it to include juice and sport drinks, etc. Ten to fifteen miles away from the store is too far (2030 miles round trip). Make this a shorter distance, or the stores could set up recycling areas in their parking lots, or attached to the store, but separated from other business.

Name: Liza Alton

Comment: Please continue the Bottle Bill! Please make it easier for people to turn in their bottles and cans for refunds. Do not make it more difficult. I would like to added other drink and juice containers added to the bill. The current bottle program has lessened the trash alongour roads and added an income source for individuals and school and community organizations.

Name: Rebecca English

Comment: This is ridiculous that we have to go through this again. You would be taking away the incentive to keep the environment clean. Also many non profits utilize this opportunity for growth in their programs that aren't funded through other sources. Just keep it intact.

Name: Billie-Sue Riley

Comment: I oppose getting rid of the bottle deposit/redemption program. While I am not one to take my bottles back I do collect them and then reach out to groups that use them in their fundraising efforts. Getting rid of this program would be taking away an incentive to keep the environment clean. It also provides an opportunity for non profits and groups such as high school sports teams a way to easily raise money by offering to collect cans and bottles for redemption. Just keep it intact.

Name: Jean Perri

Comment: I am opposed to forcing Iowans to travel out of their way to return beverage containers. Those stores that sell beverages should have to take them back. If the grocers don't take back the containers, they shouldn't be allowed to sell the beverages.

Name: Susan Enzle

Comment: The reasons for the original bottle bill were: 1. Reduce trash and litter in city and countryside, 2. Facilitate the recycling and reuse of consumer products, and 3. Reduce the waste that goes into Iowas landfills. These reasons remain valid in 2021. Any changes to Iowas law should be in response to the fact that our current law has not kept up with changes that have taken place in the decades since that law went into effect. Given the evolution of bottled beverages it makes sense to expand redemption to other types of beverages such as waters and teas. Given the costs of redeeming beverage containers to retailers and redemption businesses, it makes sense to increase the handling fee, which has remained flat for decades. Tie future increases to inflation.It makes sense that any income which results from unclaimed deposits should go towards furthering our recycling program. Responsibility for monitoring, collecting, and distributing this income should be the responsibility of the Department of Revenue. Most important, it makes sense to continue to require that those who sell these beverage containers are also responsible for redeeming these containers. Allowing businesses to opt out of redemption by sending their customers to a redemption center 20 or 30 miles distant to their stores will place a burden on customers transportation expenses and inconvenience. I am sure that if the public were aware that this change has been proposed, there would be loud opposition to it. Those of us who remember the days before Iowas redemption law was adopted can clearly remember how many unsightly beverage cans and bottles were scattered along our roadways, creating the image that Iowa was trashy. Over the years our redemption law has worked to keep Iowa beautiful.

Name: Ireland Mahoney

Comment: In order to be effective, can and bottle redemption needs to be convenient. This bill takes the convenience out of recycling and the result will be more cans and bottles in our rivers, ditches, and streams. Any entity that sells cans and bottles should be required to take them back.

Name: Anne Spencer

Comment: Please support the bottle bill, adding incentives and making it easy for consumers to recycle. This is a very popular bill in Iowa, reflecting the values of Iowans who care for our environment. It is important that the process is convenient and worth the effort, so people are not deterred from returning. Please work to improve and maximize the benefits of this environmentally friendly consumer opportunity.

Name: P Kaufman

Comment: I support the existing bottle bill that is popular with a majority of Iowans. It has kept rivers, streams & nature generally cleaner. It is time to update the bill from the nickel deposit to a dime, as some other states have. It is time to update the bill and add other types of containers, for example water bottles were not an item when the original bill was created. Any business that sells beverages to make a profit should be required to have recycling on site. An increase to a dime deposit, with businesses receiving an increased percentage would make it more workable for them. Many non profits use the nickel deposit as fund raising for their profits. Some low income people use the deposit to stretch their modest finances. Many consumers will not drive 20 minutes to get their nickels refunded, and our parks & rivers will be messier for it.

Name: Constance Donovan

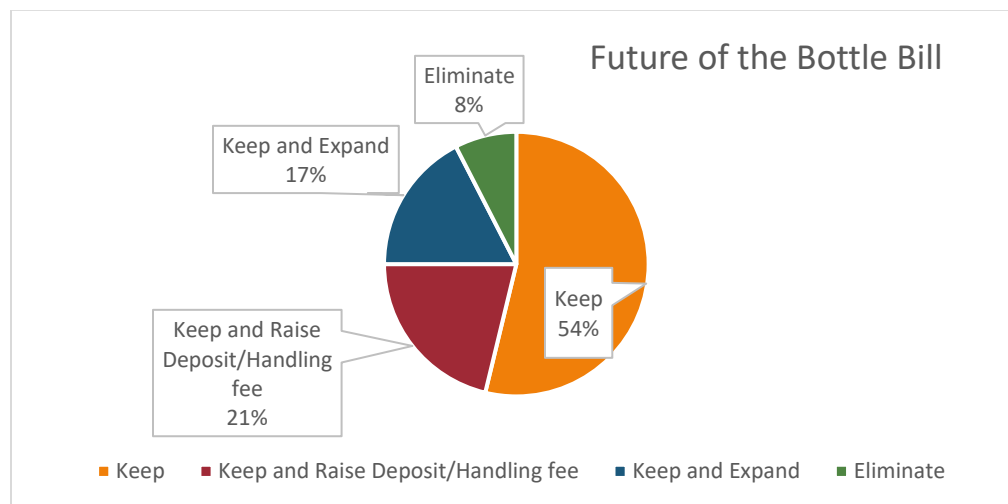
Comment: I support a recycling program, though have concerns if grocery stores should carry the burden of collecting and reclaiming beverage containers. Long story short, they are dirty, contaminated and demand additional cost on the grocery stores to reclaim and process the beverage containers.

Name: Kristi Cooper

Comment: Let's fix the bottle bill so it works for consumers and continues to protect the environment. In a January 2021 survey of nearly 600 Iowans, voters overwhelmingly stated that the Bottle redemption bill should be kept and were supportive of increasing deposit and handling fees to keep redemption locations convenient and safe. Many indicated they would be willing to pay a deposit up to 10 Cents per container if it meant making redemption convenient and safe. These Iowans also expressed interest in expanding the redemption to include all single use beverage containers including juices, water, teas, sports drinks, etc. The use of single use beverage containers increased during the August 2020 Derecho recovery period. When redemption sites closed during pandemic and Derecho disruptions, these containers began to fill up garages, litter our roadsides and fill up landfills where there are no convenient recycling services. Since these redemption locations closed voters are still saving containers to redeem later or to donate to community fundraisers and individuals who collect them for income. Allowing retailers to opt out of redeeming cans and bottles is a bad idea. Placing redemption centers farther away from consumers especially in rural areas is a bad idea for people, communities and the environment. I am attaching the Bottle Bill Survey summary. Thank you for your time and effort to make our state a good place to live.

Iowans say “Keep the Bottle Bill”.

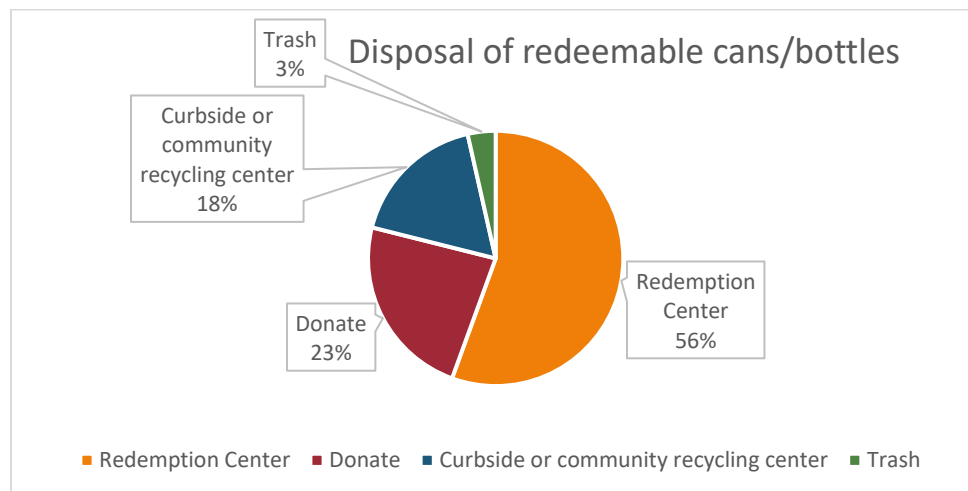
Overwhelmingly, Iowans say to keep the Bottle bill and increase deposit/handling fees. The 40+-year-old law cleaned up Iowa ditches and now provides jobs, supports community needs and supplies quality recyclable material for manufacturers. Iowans want these benefits to continue according to an independent survey of nearly 600 Iowans in January 2021.



An independent survey of 588 Iowans conducted January 15-22, 2021 revealed data about their disposal practices and opinions about the policy instituted in 1979 under the leadership of Governor Robert Ray.

It Still Works

Currently, most Iowans (79%) redeem the 5-cent deposit for themselves or donate to community fundraising efforts like local fire departments and youth programs. Nearly 20% of their redeemable containers are now going into curbside and community recycling where available, and 3% goes in the Trash/Landfill.



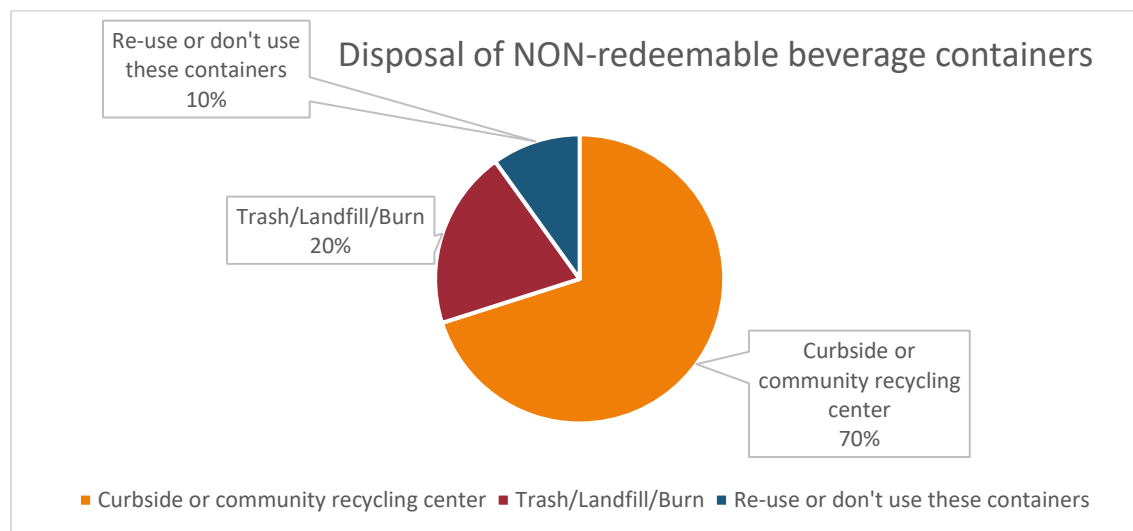
Raise the Deposit/Handling Fee

Nearly one third of lowans surveyed said 5-cents was not enough of an incentive to redeem the containers and indicated that legislators should raise the deposit and handling fees to keep redemption centers viable. Most stated that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find clean, convenient locations to redeem those cans/bottles. Many want the law to be enforced for retailers that sell the products but do not take the redeemable containers. Rural consumers said they travel 25 – 60 miles to the nearest redemption center and have no recycling services in their county.

Expand to include other single use beverage containers.

Respondents want legislators to expand the bill to include all single use beverage containers to keep the landscape clean, and plastic out of landfills. Many also said that disposal of glass containers was an issue in most areas of the state.

When asked where they dispose of non-redeemable single use beverage containers, lowans said 70% go to curbside or community recycling programs where available, 20% goes to trash or landfill. Ten percent say they reuse the containers, use them minimally or not at all.

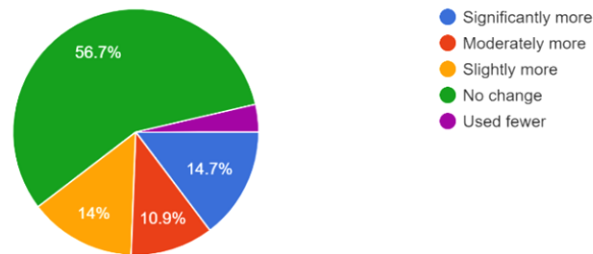


Derecho and Pandemic Affect Use and Disposal

The use of single use beverage containers increased during the August 2020 Derecho recovery. Consumer waste adds strain on communities overwhelmed with massive clean-up efforts and disrupted waste management systems. Respondents indicated that when redemption centers were closed temporarily due to the pandemic and derecho that they saved the containers to redeem later or donated them to community fundraisers and individuals who collected them.

During the derecho recovery period how many single use beverage containers did your household use?

578 responses



About:

The 7-question survey was answered by 588 Facebook users January 15 – 22, 2021. The survey was shared 40 times reaching Iowa citizens in NW, SW, Central, and Eastern Iowa. Responses were anonymous. The survey was conducted by Kristi Cooper, an independent consultant, living in eastern Iowa. For more information contact Cooper at kristicooperconsulting@gmail.com.