

One Year after Microsite Launch, Support for Recycling Refund Programs Gaining Momentum

The Alliance for Mission-Based Recyclers, The Association of Plastic Recyclers, C3 Solutions, and National Taxpayers Union are Newest Groups to Endorse Recycling Refund Principles

WASHINGTON, DC — September 27, 2023 -- Last September, the Aluminum Association and Can Manufacturers Institute launched an informational microsite – www.RecyclingRefundsWork.org – that includes guiding principles for efficient and effective recycling refund programs. These principles were endorsed by an ideologically diverse group of organizations; one year later, support for these recycling refund programs continues to grow. Recently, groups including the [Alliance for Mission-Based Recyclers](#), [The Association of Plastic Recyclers](#), [C3 Solutions](#), and [National Taxpayers Union](#), joined as the latest endorsers of these principles.

In recycling refund programs, consumers essentially buy the beverage and borrow the container. When the borrowed container is returned, it delivers high quality materials domestically for recycling into new products, including beverage containers.

U.S. beverage recycling rates have stagnated or declined in recent years, at massive cost to the economy and the environment. To cite just one example, each year consumers throw away around \$800 million worth of aluminum beverage cans – the equivalent of 12 twelve-packs for every American. Recycling refunds – or container deposit – programs have a proven track record of increasing recycling rates. The 10 states plus Guam that have such programs enjoy recycling rates two, three, or four times more than non-recycling refund states.

“Recycling rates in the United States are not what they need to be – which is bad for the economy and bad for the environment,” said Charles Johnson, president and CEO of The Aluminum Association. “The good news is there’s a ready solution in recycling refund programs – a common sense program that enjoys broad popularity with Americans across the ideological spectrum.”

“It is great to see support continue to grow for this effective, common-sense way to incentivize consumers to recycle,” said Robert Budway, president of Can Manufacturers Institute. “We plan to build additional support to implement recycling refund programs at both the federal and state levels. Recycling refunds reduce unsightly litter and keep valuable recyclable materials out of landfills. Recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions, as well as create jobs and resilient supply chains.”

Recycling refund programs are popular across party lines. A public [opinion poll](#) found that 81percent of Americans support recycling refund programs, which place a fully refundable deposit (usually 5 or 10 cents) on beverage containers at the time of purchase that is refunded upon return of the container.

Support for these programs registered at more than 70 percent across all political and demographic groups. Residents of states with existing recycling refund programs displayed the highest level of support at 90 percent.

Adding to the growing momentum for these programs, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee announced a [hearing](#) on September 28 that will examine federal policy ideas to reduce beverage container waste by increasing recycling rates. Recycling refund programs play a key role in solving this problem.

To learn more about the guiding principles and benefits of recycling refund programs, visit www.RecyclingRefundsWork.org.

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What Supporting Organizations Say

Alliance for Mission-Based Recyclers: “A well-designed Recycling Refund program can help drive increased recycling rates, prevent cans and bottles from going in the trash, and ensure that our existing recycling systems for all materials continue to improve and grow to serve more communities.”

The Association of Plastic Recyclers: “The public is demanding more convenient recycling programs and US manufacturers are demanding more domestic sources of recycled plastics to support industry demand. We need public policy and infrastructure investments at the state and federal levels to increase recycling collection. Collecting more recyclable plastics is good for US consumers, good for US manufacturing, and good for our environment.”

C3 Solutions: “Recycling programs that harness the power of incentives and focus on outcomes will benefit consumers and the environment alike. As states pursue ways to improve recycling rates, programs that rely on market mechanisms with strong oversight and transparency will yield better results. These guiding principles provide a checklist for any successful program.”

National Taxpayers Union: "As a former state senator, I know how hard it is to make recycling programs that work well for the environment and our wallets. That's why National Taxpayers Union endorses these principles. These guidelines are an excellent start for lawmakers looking to make recycling refund programs that help both taxpayers and the environment. We're proud of our successes over the past year and excited to keep helping state governments around the country create good recycling policies."

Leah Vukmir, Senior Vice President of State Affairs, National Taxpayers Union

About The Aluminum Association. The Aluminum Association represents aluminum production and jobs in the United States, ranging from primary production to value added products to recycling, as well as suppliers to the industry. The association is the industry's leading voice, representing companies that make 70% of the aluminum and aluminum products shipped in North America. The association develops global standards, business intelligence, sustainability research and industry expertise for member companies, policymakers and the general public. The aluminum industry helps manufacturers produce sustainable and innovative products, including more fuel-efficient vehicles, recyclable packaging, greener buildings and modern electronics. In the U.S., the aluminum industry supports \$176 billion in economic activity and more than 634,000 jobs. For more information visit <https://www.aluminum.org> or find us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

About Can Manufacturers Institute. The Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI) is the national trade association of the metal can manufacturing industry and its suppliers in the United States. The can industry accounts for the annual domestic production of approximately 130.7 billion food, beverage and general line cans; employs more than 28,000 people with plants in 33 states, Puerto Rico and American Samoa; and generates about \$15.7 billion in direct economic activity. In 2021, CMI members announced ambitious U.S. aluminum beverage can [recycling rate targets](#). Those targets are reaching a 70 percent recycling rate by 2030, 80 percent by 2040 and 90 percent by 2050. CMI members are committed to providing safe, nutritious and refreshing canned food and beverages to consumers in the most sustainable packaging For more information visit cancentral.com or find us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).