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STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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**REPORT SHOWS CALIFORNIA'S BEVERAGE CONTAINER
RECYCLING PROGRAM IS NATION'S MOST COST-EFFECTIVE**

**Bottles and Cans Much More Likely to Live Again
In States Where a Deposit is Charged**

SACRAMENTO – A new report says consumers in the 10 states with bottle bills recycle dramatically higher volumes of beverage containers than their counterparts in non-deposit states, and that California's unique system is the nation's most cost-effective.

The report, *Understanding Beverage Container Recycling: A Value Chain Assessment*, was released today at the annual National Recycling Coalition Congress in Seattle. Using data from 1999, the report says bottle bill states averaged 422 containers recycled per capita – 373 per capita in California – compared with 127 per capita in non-deposit states using curbside collection and 31 per capita for neighborhood drop-off programs.

While pointing out the environmental benefits of recycling – energy savings, avoided greenhouse gas emissions and avoided landfill use – the report also noted a general downward trend in beverage container recycling nationwide.

In comparing the cost effectiveness of various recovery systems, California's came in at 0.55 cents per container recovered. Traditional deposit programs averaged 2.21 cents per container. Curbside programs averaged 1.72 cents per container. Residential drop-off programs averaged 0.30 cents per container, but had by far the lowest recovery rates.

"While we're happy to see that California's recycling program, and deposit programs in general, are leading the way in beverage container recycling, we're not satisfied with what we've done," said Darryl Young, director of the California Department of Conservation, which administers the state's bottle bill. "We're working to raise recycling rates in California. In 2000, more than 6 billion bottles and cans ended up in the trash. Californians can do better than that."

California's system differs in several ways from traditional deposit programs. Most notably, containers are redeemed at privately owned recycling centers rather than at retail stores. Also, the deposit is 2.5 cents on containers less than 24 ounces and 5 cents on containers 24 ounces or greater, compared with the 5 or 10 cents typical in other programs, and containers do not have to be sorted by brand or distributor.

The report is the work of a task force put together by the group Business and Environmentalists Allied for Recycling (BEAR). The task force consists of representatives from BEAR's steering committee as well as representatives of a major beverage producer, a container producer, a waste management firm, a plastics processor, and local and state government.

The complete report can be found at www.globalgreenusa.org/bear. More information about California's program can be found at www.conservation.ca.gov.

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