



NEWS RELEASE

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BEAR Recycling Study Flawed and Riddled with Bias

*Study Underestimates Costs of Forced Deposits and Inflates Costs of Curbside Recycling in
Transparent Effort to Make Bottle Bills More Attractive to Policymakers*

(Washington, DC) The National Soft Drink Association (NSDA) today said a report released by the group Business and Environmentalists Aligned for Recycling (BEAR) on the costs of beverage container recycling is inaccurate and tilted toward promoting forced container deposits. NSDA also reaffirmed its commitment to comprehensive curbside and drop-off recycling as the most efficient way to maximize recycling all types of solid waste.

“We could not disagree more strongly with the BEAR report,” said NSDA President, William L. Ball, III. “The numbers on which the study is based are, in many cases, so flawed that they make it impossible to draw any meaningful conclusions from the data.”

An analysis of the BEAR report conducted by Northbridge Environmental Management Consultants ([see attached](#)) shows that California’s container recovery system costs approximately \$275 per ton, not the \$118 per ton claimed by the BEAR report. At the same time BEAR underestimated costs in California, they overestimated costs of collecting beverage containers via curbside recycling. The result is an erroneous conclusion that the California approach is the preferred method for recovering beverage containers. The Northbridge analysis shows the costs per ton for curbside and drop-off recycling to be less than the costs for California or any other forced deposit system.

“At best, the BEAR report contains some sloppy research, at worst it appears the numbers may have been manipulated to achieve a desired conclusion,” said Preston Read, NSDA Director of Environmental Affairs. “We have many reservations about the numbers used in the report, especially those from California. Any policymaker should be suspicious of a report that so badly missed the mark on California.

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“Compared to our calculation of \$275 per ton, the study’s \$118 per ton is a gross underestimate. Still, it is better than the \$28 per ton original number that was leaked in November and then abandoned because of widespread skepticism. Simply put, the BEAR report is unreliable and no policymaker should feel comfortable using these numbers when considering policy options for addressing solid waste,” Read concluded.

Forced Deposits are Inefficient, Expensive and Undermine Curbside Recycling Programs

Today there are more than 9700 curbside recycling programs in the United States. Deposit laws strip these programs of their most valuable component, beverage containers. Deposit laws are a 1970’s solution to a 21st Century problem. Community leaders understand the need for comprehensive and cost-effective recycling programs that collect multiple materials.

BEAR missed an opportunity to provide a real service to communities across the country by delivering an unbiased study of options for handling solid waste. Instead, they produced a flawed report designed to support the views of deposit law advocates.

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The National Soft Drink Association is the trade association representing the broad spectrum of companies that manufacture and distribute non-alcoholic beverages in the United States.