CRI

CONTAINER RECYCLING INSTITUTE

1911 Fort Myer Drive • Suite 702 • Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone (703) 276-9800 • Fax (703) 276-9587
Email: CRI@Container-Recycling.org
www.Container-Recycling.org
www.BottleBill.org

DIVERSE GROUP OF BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS RELEASES NEW REPORT DEMONSTRATING THAT:

- **Financial incentives are necessary to reach 80 percent recovery for beverage containers.**
- **Container deposit programs far out-perform curbside recycling programs.**

The report, released on January 16, 2002, titled *Understanding Beverage Container Recycling: A Value Chain Assessment*, is the culmination of a project initiated by Businesses and Environmentalists Allied for Recycling (BEAR) in May 2001. Stage I of BEAR's Multi-Stakeholder Recovery Project (MSRP) brought together a diverse group of 17 stakeholders including The Container Recycling Institute (CRI), Coca-Cola, Waste Management and Tomra North America to examine the state of beverage container recycling and compare the costs of various recycling systems.

The report is unique in that it was written by a team of consultants including R.W. Beck, Franklin Associates, Tellus, and Sound Research Management, under the close scrutiny of business and environmental interests.

CRI believes this report is historic. <u>The report provides hard numbers that confirm the superior performance of deposit/return programs over curbside recycling and drop-off collection</u>.

For the first time, revenues are identified that can offset the cost of deposit programs: money from the sale of the used bottles and cans, and deposit money left in the system by consumers who choose not to return their containers for refunds (unredeemed deposits). <u>When those revenues are factored in, deposit programs are less costly than curbside programs—at no cost to taxpayers</u>. For example, states with a 5-10 cent deposit recover 61.6% of all beverage containers targeted, and recover 125 containers per dollar spent. Curbside programs recover 18.5% of all beverage containers targeted, and recover 58 containers per dollar spent.

The report also shows that <u>some deposit programs have discovered cost-saving features that increase efficiency and reduce costs</u>. For example, costs can be reduced when automated 'reverse vending' machines are used for container returns and by elimination of the requirement for brand sorting, such as in California and some Canadian provinces.

One of the most revealing findings in the report is the fact that in 1999 the 10 deposit states, with a total population of 81.6 million, recycled more beverage containers (32.6 billion containers) through the deposit system than were recycled through curbside programs (25.4 billion containers) in the remaining 40 states with a total population of 199.9 million. <u>When all recycling programs were counted, deposit states, representing only 29% of the total U.S. population, recycled 40 billion beverage containers in 1999 as opposed to 38 billion recycled in the non-deposit states, representing 71% of the total U.S. population.</u>

As we move into Stage II of the MSRP, seeking common ground on which to move toward BEAR's 80% recycling goal, it is clear that financial incentives will be required to attain that goal. The next stage of the MSRP should broaden its research to include optimized deposit systems in Canada and Western Europe that reduce costs without sacrificing performance.