



## PROTECTING CLEAN WATER TOGETHER

By Carol Hillestad for the Brodhead Watershed Association

### Tired of Trash? Speak Up!

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Summer is when you really notice the trash along our local roads. Sometimes it just gets too much to stand, and you may have done some roadside clean-up yourself.

If so, you know that much of that stuff is recyclable — up to 60 percent of roadside garbage is plastic bottles and metal cans.

Unfortunately, Pennsylvania isn't one of the states that control the ugliness by requiring deposits on bottles and cans (which slashes state cleanup costs). In those 10 states, you pay a deposit when you buy the beer, soda, or other beverage, then get the money back when you return the empty container.

There's nothing new about bottle bills in the US — one way and another, they've been around since 1953. There's less trash to start with, so roadsides stay cleaner, and some folks make a business of collecting and returning bottles and cans that careless people don't return.

Deposit laws work! They cut down on beverage containers trashing the scenery, reduce waste going to landfills, and conserve resources.

So why are good-hearted citizens in Pennsylvania still having to pick up road trash?

In a word: pressure.

Grocery chains and beverage bottlers have clout with elected officials. Nobody likes change, and it takes effort — and some cash — to set up bottle and can redemption. So every time someone in the PA legislature brings up a bottle bill, the big guns come out, and the bill dies.

Your voice can make a difference.

Write, call or email your State Representative and State Senator. Ask them to tell you what their position is on deposit laws for plastic bottles and metal cans. If they're not in favor, ask them to explain why. If they are in favor, ask them what they're doing to move the idea forward — and what you can do to help.

There may always be a piggy few who toss trash, and change doesn't happen quickly. But nothing at all happens if good people — like you — don't speak up.

A bottle bill encourages people not to litter, keeps our roads cleaner, and saves the state clean-up money.

*To find out who your legislators are, type "find my legislator PA" into your computer search engine. You can also get help at your local library.*

*The ten states that have deposit laws are Oregon, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, Iowa, California, Hawaii, Maine and Michigan. Together, these states account for about a quarter of the U.S. population. Seven states reported a reduction of beverage container litter of from 70 to 83 percent, and a reduction in total litter of from 30 to 47 percent after implementing their bottle bill.*

*It takes 22 gallons of water (176 pounds) to make one pound of plastic.*



*photo of can/bottle with deposit info imprint*

*For humans, fish, and every living thing, Brodhead Watershed Association protects water quality and quantity throughout our area. Get involved! Become a member today. <https://www.brodheadwatershed.org>.*