



LEGISLATION

UMC ADVOCACY TEAM –JANUARY 2018 (1.1)

BOTTLE BILL--RECYCLING

SUMMARY OF POSITION: We support the current Iowa law requiring a five-cent refundable deposit on certain containers because it has proven highly effective in encouraging recycling and reducing road side waste. The monetary incentive

to recycle creates an important personal investment in the recycling process. Replacing the bottle bill with an encouragement to recycle would remove that incentive.

United Methodist Official Statements

We support and encourage social policies that... provide for appropriate recycling and disposal of municipal waste; and assist the cleanup of polluted air, water, and soil.

2016 *Book of Discipline*, Paragraph 160 (A)

The Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church supports the bottle bill and offers these enhancements: (Resolution #9110, Iowa 2017 Book of Resolutions p. 14.)

1. Place the 5-cent deposit on bottle and cans used for tea, water, fruit and vegetable juices and drinks, sports drinks and non-carbonated beverages.
2. Increase the per-container handling fee paid to groceries and redemption centers and establish a schedule for future increases.

SUPPORTING FACTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

1--Enactment of the Beverage Containers Control Law in 1978 brought an immediate and sizable reduction in beverage container litter (77% reduction according to the Iowa Department of Transportation) as individuals became engaged in recycling. (1)

2--That personal engagement has resulted in 86 percent of eligible containers being redeemed in Iowa. The national average is 29 percent.

3--Repeated surveys have found that the current bottle bill is overwhelmingly popular among Iowans. (2)

4--From an economic justice perspective, the current system of financial reward for recycling gives people of low income an additional income source as they collect cans and bottles from public spaces.

5--Grocers and convenience stores favor expansion of curbside recycling in the state in lieu of a bottle bill. A better approach would be expanded curbside recycling in addition to the bottle bill. Studies across the nation of alternatives to a bottle deposit law show that no alternative comes close to the effectiveness of the Iowa law, in fact studies show that a dual curbside/deposit program will remove more materials from the waste stream at less cost than a curbside program alone. (Iowa 2017 Resolution # 9110.)

Notes:

(1) John A. Gersib, letter to the editor, *The Des Moines Register*, January 3, 2018

(2) An Iowa Poll in February 2017 found 77% approval. (A poll in November funded by the Iowa Beverage Association and conducted by the Tarrance Group, a Republican polling firm, reported that 55% of Iowans favor a different approach to recycling.)

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