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### **Coalition of Environmental, Recycling and Beverage Organizations Forms to Oppose Beverage Sales Tax Proposed in HB3940**

A diverse coalition comprised of environmental non-profits, recycling entities, local beverage associations, and grocery retailers has formed to protect Oregon's treasured Bottle Bill.

The coalition argues that a new beverage sales tax proposed in HB3940 to fund wildfire preparation would have disastrous consequences on the Oregon Bottle Bill, threatening decades of recycling and environmental outcomes.

The coalition, led by Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC), sent a letter urging reconsideration to legislators, including members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment where the bill is set for a hearing on Tuesday April 1 at 8:00 AM.

"We urge legislators to protect the Oregon Bottle Bill," said Lindsey Scholten, Executive Director of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. "Oregonians treasure our state's natural beauty and value the important role Oregon's landmark Bottle Bill has in maintaining it. It reduces litter in our communities and natural areas, and it is a recycling powerhouse—facilitating the recycling of more than two billion beverage containers each year. It also provides a powerful fundraising opportunity for thousands of nonprofits across the state through programs like BottleDrop Give," added Scholten.

Under Oregon's model, Oregon's beverage container return system is operated by private industry – using zero taxpayer dollars-- to fulfill a public good and serves every one of the state's more than four million residents.

"Oregon's Bottle Bill is a model of excellence in industry stewardship. It consistently achieves the gold-standard in redemption rates (90.4% in 2024) and recycling outcomes. If implemented, this beverage sales tax will cause Oregon's redemption rate to plummet and it will damage the effectiveness of Oregon's Bottle Bill" said Jason Jordan, President of OBRC.

OBRC is the state's steward of the Oregon Bottle Bill and operates Oregon's modern, world-class beverage redemption system through the BottleDrop network. It is an example of an industry responsibility model that used a financial incentive tied to a product category (beverage containers) to change consumer behavior to achieve a desired outcome (littering less).



The Bottle Bill is a critical source of funding for 6900 nonprofits located in every part of Oregon, a tool used by almost 7000 families to save for college or disability, and a way to save money on groceries for more than 200,000 Oregonians each year. The Bottle Bill provides an essential lifeline for many Oregonians. Every year, more than \$200 million is paid out to Oregonians in container refunds, in some cases determining whether there will be food on the table, or a utility bill paid.

“This beverage sales tax will raise the cost of essential food items (beverages) at a time when Oregonians are stretched, facing increased pressure on their grocery budgets and uncertain economic headwinds,” said Steve Gibbs, VP of Government Affairs for Columbia Distributing, a local beverage distribution company.

Led by the steward of Oregon’s Bottle Bill, Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, the coalition members include:

- Association of Oregon Recyclers
- Columbia Distributing
- Northwest Grocery Retailers Association
- Oregon Beer & Wine Distributors Association
- Oregon Environmental Council
- Oregon League of Conservation Voters
- Oregon Beverage Association
- Oregon Wine Council
- Oregon Business & Industry
- Anheuser-Busch
- 7 Eleven

A tax on beverage container sales has absolutely no nexus with the causes of wildfires. The coalition recognizes the importance of wildfire preparation and urges legislators to find a more appropriate funding mechanism.

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