

Senate approves "Bottle Bill" requiring 5-cent deposit for plastic water containers

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SALEM, Ore. — The Senate on Thursday passed SB 707, the aptly named "Bottle Bill" which adds plastic bottles used for water and flavored water to those that will carry a five cent recycling deposit in the state of Oregon.

"More than thirty years ago Oregon seized the opportunity to create a landmark piece of Oregon that not only affirmed Oregon's commitment to the environment, but also defined our state's ingenuity for decades," said State Representative Peter Buckley (D-Ashland). "Today's vote reaffirms a visionary law that has been, and will continue to be, a source of pride for Oregonians."

Democrats say the bill is needed because the original Bottle Bill only included malt beverage and carbonated beverage containers. Oregonians are currently throwing away 126 million empty water bottles each year. Adding water bottles to the Bottle Bill, Democrats say, has the potential to increase the recycling of millions more beverage containers, keep millions of containers out of landfills and conserve energy and resources.

"When I speak with constituents, I'm often asked why we're not going even further with this expansion at this time," said State Representative Ben Cannon (D-Portland). "Part of what I tell them is it doesn't take very long in the legislature before you become thankful for small blessings. We've had thirty-six years without expansion so it is incredibly significant that we are doing something now. The other thing I tell them is: Let's keep working on it."

In addition to adding the five cent deposit to water bottles, the will also create a task force to consider other recommended changes to the current Bottle Bill, such as expansion to include juice containers, tea and sports drinks, and report back to the Legislature on ways to improve its efficiency and convenience.

"The original Bottle Bill helped begin Oregon's tradition of environmental stewardship," said Speaker Pro Tempore Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). "Today, we honor the efforts of those who led the effort decades ago while also bringing their accomplishments into the 21st century."

Oregon's bottle bill was originally passed in 1971 and at the time was the first of its kind in the nation and increased recycling in Oregon by 80 percent.

The bill was amended in the House so it now moves to the Senate for concurrence before receiving the signature of the Governor.

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