

## **Letter to Oregonian Newspaper from DEQ, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

### **Compensate bottle retailers**

In his opinion piece, "It's more than politics for Oregon's grocers" (Dec. 15), Joe Gilliam of the Northwest Grocery Association is right about one thing -- grocers in Oregon do much of the work that makes our bottle bill successful, and they don't get paid anything for that work.

Oregon is the only bottle-bill state where the retailers get nothing for their costs of handling and recycling our bottles and cans.

Gilliam is wrong, however, in asserting that the Department of Environmental Quality wants to change the bottle bill so that we get the unredeemed nickels to spend on our priorities.

DEQ believes that unredeemed deposits should be used fairly to help pay the costs of the private companies that do the real work under the bottle bill -- be they grocers or possibly independent redemption centers, which you find in most other bottle-bill states.

Oregon has no independent redemption centers because redemption centers cannot survive financially the way our bottle bill is set up. DEQ believes that unredeemed deposits should stay in the bottle bill system and help make the bottle bill fairer, more effective and more comprehensive.

We do believe the bottle bill should be expanded to cover juices, waters and similar beverages because the bottle bill has been so effective in promoting recycling, reducing litter and saving energy and resources.

Oregonians recycle 83 percent of the beverage containers with bottle bill deposits compared with 37 percent of beverage containers collected curbside without deposits.

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