



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

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California's Big Recycling Increase a Boon to Environment *Report Shows How Recycling More Beverage Containers Helps State Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

SACRAMENTO – An increase in the refund available for empty beverage containers prompted Californians to achieve a significant jump in recycling in the first half of 2007. In the process, they also created a substantial environmental benefit, according to a new report just released by the state Department of Conservation.

"I applaud Californians for increasing their recycling over the past year and helping California lead the way toward a healthier environment," said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who signed legislation last fall to increase California Refund Value on beverage containers. "Recycling is something each of us can do every day to reduce our impact on the environment."

The *Six-Month Report of Beverage Container Recycling & Significant Carbon Reductions* shows California's beverage container recycling rate rose six percentage points, to 71 percent, from January-June 2007. By recycling billions of aluminum cans, glass and plastic bottles during that time, Californians decreased greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 230,000 passenger cars from the roadways for a year.

To determine the amount of greenhouse gas emission reductions achieved through recycling beverage containers, the DOC used the Waste Reduction Model developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Emission calculations were based on the total volume of aluminum, glass and plastic beverage containers recycled in California.

According to the EPA, products manufactured from recycled material require less energy than using virgin resources, and lower energy consumption results in fewer greenhouse gas emissions, which are considered the primary cause of climate change. The DOC compared the recycling rate of the first six months of 2006 and the first six months of 2007 to determine the beverage container recycling rate change.

"With environmental concerns a hot topic, it's good to know every individual can make

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a difference one bottle or can at a time by recycling,” DOC Director Bridgett Luther said. “Governor Schwarzenegger recognized this when he signed legislation to increase California Refund Value on beverage containers, and Californians responded by recycling an additional 800 million containers in the first six months of 2007. Whether people take their empties to a recycling center for a refund, put them in a curbside recycling bin, or remember to recycle when they’re at work or out and about, the environment wins.”

Each year, the report says, California consumes 657 million barrels of oil and emits 492 million metric tons of greenhouse gas. By recycling nearly 7 billion beverage containers from January-June, Californians saved the equivalent of 2.5 million barrels of oil, and reduced emissions equivalent to 293,000 metric tons of carbon related to greenhouse gas.

To find nearby recycling centers, consumers can visit www.bottlesandcans.com and enter their zip code, or call the Department of Conservation toll-free hotline, 1-800-RECYCLE.

The increase in California Refund Value took effect on January 1, 2007, and raised the refund consumers receive for each CRV beverage container from four cents to a nickel for containers less than 24 ounces and eight cents to a dime for containers 24 ounces and larger. Assembly Bill 3056 also provided funding for a statewide marketing campaign to educate Californians about CRV and to promote recycling awareness and participation.

Most beverages packaged in glass, aluminum and plastic, such as soft drinks, water, beer, sports drinks, juices and coffee and tea drinks, are included in the CRV program. Notable exceptions are milk, wine and distilled spirits.

All aspects of the state’s beverage container recycling program are paid for with unclaimed refunds of CRV beverage containers, at no cost to the state's general fund.

In addition to promoting beverage container recycling, the Department of Conservation maps and studies earthquakes and other geologic phenomena; classifies areas containing mineral deposits; ensures reclamation of land used for mining; regulates oil, gas and geothermal wells; and administers agricultural and open-space land conservation programs.

For more information about DOC programs, visit www.conservation.ca.gov.

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