

Canadian Environmental Law Association | Citizens' Network on Waste Management | David Suzuki Foundation | Ecology Ottawa | Environmental Defence Canada | Environment Hamilton | Greenpeace Canada | Toronto Environmental Alliance

April 1, 2015

Premier Kathleen Wynne
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Submitted by email to kwynne.mpp@liberal.ola.org

Re: Liquor, wine and beer deposit-return in Ontario

Dear Premier Wynne:

We the undersigned environmental and health groups urge your government to consider the environment in decisions and/or new agreements regarding the liquor, wine and beer sales in Ontario. We have no opinion on where these alcoholic beverages are sold. However, we urge you to ensure that every retailer of beer, wine and liquor in Ontario must remain within a deposit return system that not only maintains but increases the use of refillable containers.

As Ontario considers and develops new waste policy and programs, including a move towards 100% Producer Responsibility, it is crucial to build on successful and effective stewardship programs.

Research around the world, including the experience of Ontario, shows that deposit return programs are the most effective tool to recover containers and packaging. For example, Ontario's Beer Store and Ontario Deposit Return Program (ODRP) systems recover far more than other recycling systems - 90% of all alcohol containers sold in Ontario are collected. Compared to a recycling rate of 56% for drink containers collected in Ontario Blue Box programs, it's clear that a deposit program is more effective in Ontario.¹

More significantly, the existing deposit return for refillable beer bottles has a much greater environmental benefit. Refilled up to 15 times, these containers use significantly less energy and require fewer resources than single use containers made from virgin or recycled material.

The Beer Store's recovery rate for refillable bottles is 99%.² Across North America, advocates for 100% Producer Responsibility point to the Beer Store's deposit return system that relies on

¹ CM Consulting, *Who Pays What: An Analysis of Beverage Container Collection & Costs in Canada*, May 2014 (<http://www.cmconsultinginc.com/2014/07/newly-released-pays-2014/>).

² Beer Store, *Stewardship Report 2013-14* (<http://www.thebeerstore.ca/tbs-environmental-report.html>).

refillables as a model for success. It is also a model for how beverage companies can reduce their greenhouse gas pollution, a goal we all share.

Your Government must ensure that any changes to where liquor, wine and beer is sold in Ontario builds on, and enhances this success, by increasing the number and types of refillable containers, and maintaining one or more deposit return systems.

This must happen to reduce harmful impacts on the environment. As well, it must happen to ensure the current financial burden on Ontarians (who pay for this product and packaging waste through municipal taxes and user fees) is reduced, not increased.

Finally, your Mandate letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change directs the Minister to develop and implement “improved approaches to waste diversion.” We fully support this direction. That is why we urge your Government to learn from the success of the Beer Store’s deposit return system and move quickly towards more refillable beverage containers and a deposit on all beverage containers in Ontario. Doing so would dramatically improve Ontario’s waste reduction, provide a predictable flow of valuable raw material for re-use and help to achieve Ontario’s carbon emission reduction targets through reduced energy use for the manufacture of new raw materials

Sincerely,

Toronto Environmental Alliance (Franz Hartmann, Executive Director)
Canadian Environmental Law Association (Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director)
Citizens’ Network on Waste Management (John Jackson, Coordinator)
David Suzuki Foundation (Faisal Moola, Director General, Ontario and Northern Canada)
Ecology Ottawa (Graham Saul, Executive Director)
Environmental Defence Canada (Tim Gray, Executive Director)
Greenpeace Canada (Joanna Kerr, Executive Director)

Cc: Hon. Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure
Hon. Glen Murray, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario