



**TO** Interested parties  
**FROM** Beacon Research  
**DATE** July 18, 2024  
**SUBJECT** Findings from Statewide Survey of Massachusetts Voters

---

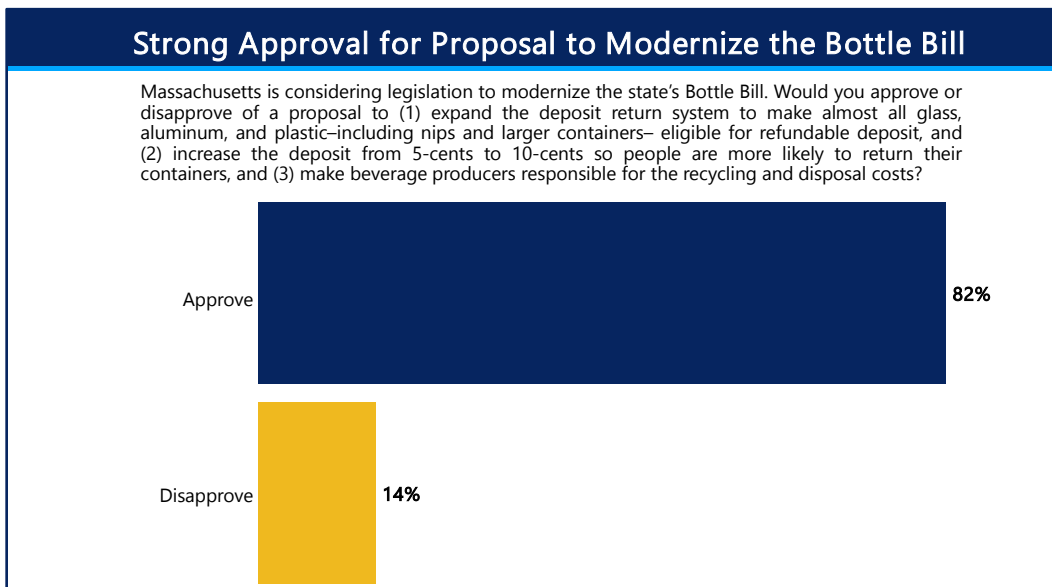
This document presents key findings from a poll of 610 Massachusetts voters conducted July 10-16, 2024. Full methodological details and full topline results are included at the end of this document.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Massachusetts voters overwhelmingly approve (82%) of legislation to modernize the state's Bottle Bill.
- Support for modernizing the Bottle Bill is bipartisan: 89% of Democrats, 79% of Republicans and 79% of unenrolled voters approve the measure.
- Nearly all voters (95%) think reducing waste and litter is important for the quality of life in the Commonwealth.
- After learning Massachusetts has not updated its Bottle Bill since 1983, and that it excludes many popular beverage containers, three-quarters (75%) of voters say the Bottle Bill needs an update.
- Almost nine-in-ten voters (88%) agree that common types of recycling beverage containers should have a refundable deposit, while 83% agree Massachusetts has a litter problem, especially with nips and plastic bottles.
- The economic and environmental reasons for supporting the new Bottle Bill are equally compelling to voters.

## KEY FINDINGS

Massachusetts voters broadly approve of legislation to modernize the state’s Bottle Bill. More than eight-in-ten (82%) of voters approve of a bill to expand the deposit return system, increase the deposit from 5-cents to 10-cents, and to make beverage producers responsible for the recycling and disposal costs.



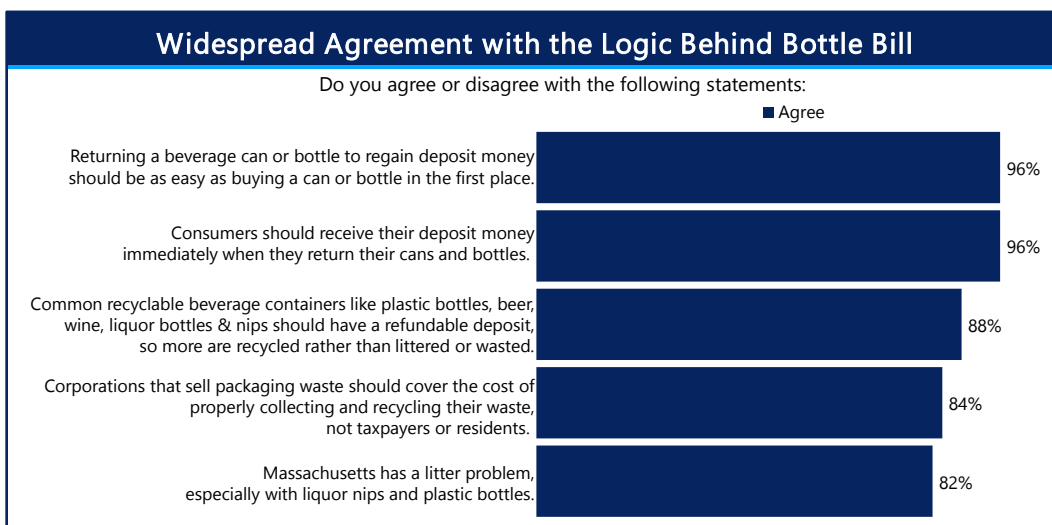
The efforts to revamp the Bottle Bill are approved by a diverse, bipartisan segment of the electorate. Approval is especially high among voters of color (91% approve) and Democrats (89%) but is also backed by a wide majority of Republicans (79%) and unenrolled voters (79%).

Underlying this high level of support is the near-universal (95%) belief that reducing waste and litter is important for the quality of life in Massachusetts. Reducing waste and litter is seen as important across the Commonwealth, with voters in urban (96% important), suburban (95%) and rural areas (93%) all ascribing the goal as meaningful for the quality of life.



When voters are informed the Bottle Bill has not changed its deposit value since 1983, and that it excludes many popular types of beverage containers, fully three-quarters (75%) of the electorate indicates they think Massachusetts’ Bottle Bill needs an update, with only 14% thinking it does not.

There is widespread agreement among voters about the logic of updating Massachusetts’ Bottle Bill. As consumers, there is a near-consensus view that returning beverage containers to regain deposit money should be as easy as buying them in the first place (96% agree), and that the deposit money should be available immediately (96%). Almost nine-in-ten (88%) voters also agree that common types of recyclable beverage containers like plastic water bottles, sports drinks, and nips should have refundable deposits.

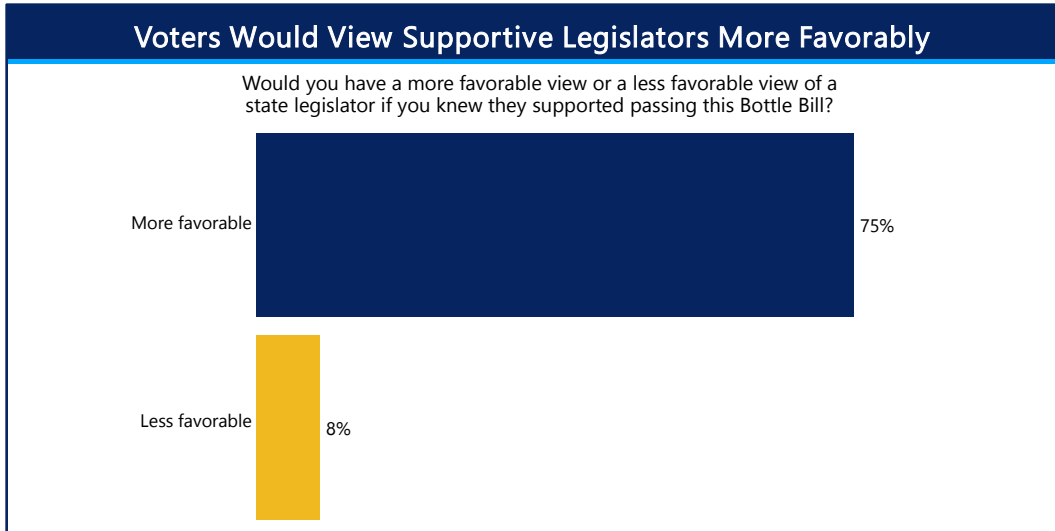


Voters recognize Massachusetts has a litter problem, especially with nips and plastic bottles (83% agree). Furthermore, when it comes to shouldering the costs of collecting and recycling packaging waste, 84% of voters agree that corporations –not taxpayers or residents– should cover the costs.

Massachusetts voters see a wide range of good reasons to modernize the Bottle Bill. To voters, the economic and environmental rationales are almost equally compelling. An overwhelming majority indicate the estimated municipal savings (87%) and taxpayer savings (86%) make them more inclined to support the bill, while reduction in pollution (86%), litter (85%) and greenhouse gas emissions (84%) make a similarly strong impression. Increased recycling (84%), job creation (81%) and the benefits to civil groups who use deposit money as a fundraising source (78%) are reasons that make voters more inclined to support an updated Bottle Bill.



The survey also indicates most of the electorate (75%) would view a state legislator more favorably if they knew they supported legislation to modernize the Bottle Bill. Only 8% of voters express a negative reaction to a legislator supporting the bill, showing there is minimal downside among constituents for backing such a measure.



## METHODOLOGY

This poll of 610 Massachusetts registered voters was conducted between the dates of July 10 and 16, 2024. Respondents were randomly selected from an online panel of active, registered voters. Slight weights were applied to account for known and estimated demographics for Massachusetts registered voters statewide by age, gender, race, education level, and political party identification. The survey was sponsored by Just Zero.



Sample: 610 Registered Massachusetts voters  
 Interviewing dates: July 10-16, 2024

**STATEWIDE SURVEY OF MASSACHUSETTS VOTERS  
 TOPLINE RESULTS**

0A. What is your ZIP code?

North	12%
South	18
West	26
Suburbs	33
Boston	11

0B. How old are you? [TERMINATE IF AGE <18]

18-29	15%
30-44	20
45-54	21
55-64	21
65+	23

0C. Are you currently registered to vote in Massachusetts?

Yes	100%
No [TERMINATE]	-
Not sure [TERMINATE]	-

1. Do you feel things in Massachusetts are:

Generally heading in the right direction	49%
Pretty seriously off on the wrong track	39
Not sure	12

How much of a problem would you say each of the following things are in Massachusetts?  
 [RANDOMIZE]

	----Problem----			----Not a problem----			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	Major	Minor	<b>TOTAL</b>	Not much	Not at all	Not sure
2. Litter and pollution	<b>83%</b>	36	46	<b>15</b>	13	2	2
3. Microplastics harming people and wildlife	<b>82%</b>	43	39	<b>12</b>	10	2	5
4. The state's budget deficit	<b>78%</b>	48	29	<b>14</b>	12	2	8
5. Climate change	<b>80%</b>	54	26	<b>18</b>	12	6	2



Most of this survey is about recycling and some related issues.

6. How important do you think reducing waste and litter is for the quality of life in Massachusetts?

<b>TOTAL IMPORTANT</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>TOTAL UNIMPORTANT</b>	<b>4</b>

Very important	61%
Somewhat important	33
Not very important	3
Not important at all	1
Not sure	1

7. As you may know, in 1983, Massachusetts passed the Bottle Bill to reduce litter from used beverage containers. It requires that customers pay 5-cent deposits when purchasing certain soft drink and beer containers. This 5-cent deposit is refunded when the beverage container is returned to a retailer or redemption center for recycling. States with similar programs report recycling rates two to four times higher than states without such programs. Do you generally support or oppose having a bottle bill program?

<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>	<b>8</b>

Strongly support	56%
Somewhat support	31
Somewhat oppose	4
Strongly oppose	4
Not sure	4

8. Massachusetts' Bottle Bill has not changed its deposit value from five cents since 1983 and does not make many popular beverages like plastic water bottles and mini liquor bottles, or "nips," eligible for a recycling refund. Knowing this, do you think Massachusetts' Bottle Bill needs an update?

Yes	75%
No	14
Not sure	11



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements: **[RANDOMIZE]**

	-----Agree-----			-----Disagree-----			
	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>Strongly</u></b>	<b><u>Some- what</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>Some- what</u></b>	<b><u>Strongly</u></b>	<b><u>Not sure</u></b>
9. Common types of recyclable beverage containers like plastic water bottles, sports drinks, beer, wine, liquor bottles and nips should have a refundable deposit so more are recycled rather than littered or wasted.	<b>88%</b>	62	26	<b>9</b>	5	4	2
10. Corporations that sell packaging waste should cover the cost of properly collecting and recycling their waste, not taxpayers or residents.	<b>84%</b>	50	34	<b>9</b>	7	2	7
11. Returning a beverage can or bottle to regain deposit money should be as easy as buying a can or bottle in the first place.	<b>96%</b>	79	17	<b>2</b>	1	1	1
12. Consumers should receive their deposit money immediately when they return their cans and bottles.	<b>96%</b>	79	17	<b>2</b>	2	*	2
13. Massachusetts has a litter problem, especially with liquor nips and plastic bottles.	<b>83%</b>	46	36	<b>11</b>	9	2	7

14. Currently, Massachusetts is considering legislation to modernize the state's Bottle Bill. Would you approve or disapprove of a proposal to (1) expand the deposit return system to make almost all glass, aluminum, and plastic—including nips and larger containers—eligible for refundable deposit, and (2) increase the deposit from 5-cents to 10-cents so people are more likely to return their containers, and (3) make beverage producers responsible for the recycling and disposal costs?

<b>TOTAL APPROVE</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>TOTAL DISAPPROVE</b>	<b>14</b>
Strongly approve	53%
Somewhat approve	30
Somewhat disapprove	8
Strongly disapprove	7
Not sure	3



Here is some additional information about recycling in Massachusetts. For each of the following pieces of information, please rate how good a reason it is to modernize the state's Bottle Bill.

[RANDOMIZE]

-----Good reason-----

	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Not a good reason</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
15. Only 40% of beverages sold in Massachusetts are currently covered by the Bottle Bill.	<b>83%</b>	59	24	13	4
16. Beverage containers are the second most littered item in the state.	<b>89%</b>	62	27	7	4
17. Massachusetts hasn't updated its Bottle Bill in more than 40 years.	<b>82%</b>	54	28	14	4
18. States that have a 10-cent refund on beverage containers have a return and recycling rate of nearly 90% on average. Massachusetts' 5-cent deposit program has a return and recycling rate of just 36%.	<b>88%</b>	69	20	9	3
19. Nearly all beverage containers collected through the Bottle Bill are recycled, and most of the material is turned back into cans and bottles.	<b>91%</b>	66	25	5	4
20. Beverage containers that aren't collected through the Bottle Bill are more likely to be downcycled into lower grade materials that can't be recycled again or end up as waste or litter.	<b>85%</b>	54	31	10	5
21. About 350 million pounds of beverage containers end up in the trash in Massachusetts each year, which taxpayers ultimately pay for through waste disposal fees.	<b>89%</b>	66	24	8	3

22. Now that you have seen more information about the legislation to modernize the state's Bottle Bill, would you approve or disapprove of a proposal to expand the beverage deposit system to (1) include almost all glass, aluminum, and plastic –from nips to 3 liter bottles– (2) increase the deposit from 5-cents to 10-cents, and (3) make beverage producers responsible for their recycling and disposal costs?

<b>TOTAL APPROVE</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>TOTAL DISAPPROVE</b>	<b>11</b>
Strongly approve	58%
Somewhat approve	28
Somewhat disapprove	7
Strongly disapprove	4
Not sure	3





Here are some things supporters of modernizing Massachusetts' Bottle Bill say. For each, please indicate if the statement makes you more inclined to support it, less inclined to support it, or if it doesn't make a difference to you. **[RANDOMIZE]**

	-----More inclined-----					
	<u><b>TOTAL</b></u>	<u>Much more</u>	<u>Some-what</u>	<u>No difference</u>	<u>Less likely</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
23. <b>[TAXPAYERS]</b> Taxpayers would save money because the containers that go through the Bottle Bill program are collected and recycled by beverage companies, not cities and towns, so cities and towns don't have to pay for recycling, waste disposal, or litter removal of those containers.	<b>86%</b>	58	28	10	3	1
24. <b>[MUNICIPAL SAVINGS]</b> Experts estimate a modern Bottle Bill would save cities and towns in Massachusetts up to \$36.5 million a year.	<b>87%</b>	62	26	10	2	1
25. <b>[EMISSIONS]</b> Scientific studies estimate modernizing the state's Bottle Bill would reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by over 200,000 tons – the equivalent of removing nearly 40,000 gas-powered cars off the roads each year.	<b>84%</b>	56	28	12	3	1
26. <b>[LITTER]</b> A national study estimates that if all these beverage containers become eligible for the deposit return system and the financial incentive to do so is doubled, Massachusetts could reduce beverage container litter by up to 85%.	<b>85%</b>	59	26	11	3	1
27. <b>[POLLUTION]</b> Modernizing the Bottle Bill would significantly reduce the amount of beverage container and non-beverage container litter in the Commonwealth, providing both ecological and public health benefits with reduced environmental exposure to toxins.	<b>86%</b>	57	29	10	3	1
28. <b>[MORE RECYCLING]</b> This modernized bill would lead to 3.1 billion additional containers being recycled each year in Massachusetts. If laid end-to-end, that is enough to span across the mainland of the U.S. nearly 140 times.	<b>84%</b>	55	29	12	3	1
29. <b>[JOBS]</b> Modernizing the Bottle Bill would create hundreds of new jobs for the Commonwealth, including truck drivers, beverage return machine technicians, and entrepreneurs who want to open their own redemption centers.	<b>81%</b>	48	34	14	4	1



	-----More inclined-----					
	<u>Much</u>	<u>Some-</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>Not</u>	
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>more</u></b>	<b><u>what</u></b>	<b><u>difference</u></b>	<b><u>likely</u></b>	<b><u>sure</u></b>	
30. <b>[FUNDRAISERS]</b> Organizations like Boy Scouts, youth sports teams, church groups, charities and other civic groups rely on bottle deposits as a fundraising source. Increasing the deposit to 10-cents would help their efforts and increase recycling at the same time.	<b>78%</b>	46	32	18	4	1

31. Would you have a more favorable view or a less favorable view of a state legislator if you knew they supported passing this Bottle Bill?

<b>TOTAL MORE FAVORABLE</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>TOTAL LESS FAVORABLE</b>	<b>8</b>

Much more favorable	33%
Somewhat more favorable	42
Somewhat less favorable	5
Much less favorable	3
It wouldn't make a difference	14
Not sure	3

32. How often do you return cans and bottles for deposit money?

<b>TOTAL RETURNS FOR DEPOSIT</b>	<b>80%</b>
----------------------------------	------------

All the time	33%
Often	23
Some of the time	24
Never	20
Not sure	1

**[IF RETURNS] [N=485]**

33. How often do you spend your deposit money in the store where you returned your containers?

<b>TOTAL SPENDS ON SITE</b>	<b>87%</b>
-----------------------------	------------

All the time	29%
Often	28
Some of the time	30
Never	11
Not sure	2

