

Public support for deposit return systems

Fact sheet update - September 2025

- Deposit return systems (DRS) continue to expand worldwide, driven by strong public support
- As of September 2025, **59 jurisdictions** have DRS in place, covering nearly **360 million people**. By 2027, this is projected to exceed **70 jurisdictions covering 644 million people**, a 79% increase in global coverage.
- Over 200 opinion polls from 2003-2025 show consistently high levels of support for new, existing, and expanded systems.
- Support is not only stable but often increases after implementation.
- Convenience, comprehensive scope, and meaningful deposit values are key drivers of participation and support.

Introduction

Deposit return systems (DRS) for beverage containers continue to gain momentum across the globe. As of September 2025, there are DRS programmes operating in 59 jurisdictions, covering 359.7 million people worldwide. By the end of 2027, this number is expected to grow to more than 70 jurisdictions covering 644.2 million people, a nearly 79% increase in global population coverage in just two years.

This rapid expansion reflects the broad and enduring public support for DRS. People support these systems because they deliver tangible environmental benefits, reduce litter, and provide consumers with a simple, transparent way to participate in recycling.

Evidence from 200+ opinion polls

Reloop has compiled and analysed data from more than 200 polling studies conducted between 2003 and 2025, examining public attitudes and opinions toward DRS. The findings are remarkably consistent worldwide. When asked about the introduction of new systems, support levels average around 80%, with a median of 81% across 121 opinion polls. For jurisdictions with existing DRS in place, support is even stronger, averaging 85% (median 88%) across 43 polls.

And when it comes to modernising current systems, by increasing deposit values or broadening the range of containers covered, 47 polls show that public support remains high, with an average of 78% and a median of 80%.

Together, this body of evidence underscores that deposit systems enjoy broad and enduring public backing, whether they are newly proposed, long established, or being improved.

Support for new DRS: Avg. 80% / Median 81%

Support for existing DRS: Avg. 85% / Median 88%

Support for DRS expansion: Avg. 78% / Median 80%

Recent polling highlights

Since our last fact sheet release in February 2024, public support for DRS has remained consistently strong across diverse geographies. In the United States (US), a 2024–25 poll¹ in Maryland found that an overwhelming 91% of

respondents supported the introduction of a DRS in that state, while in Rhode Island, more than half (58%) expressed support.² Public opinion outside North America follows a similar trend: in New Zealand, a national survey conducted in August 2025³ revealed that more than three-quarters (76%) of the population want a deposit system to be introduced.

Support is equally high where DRS programmes are already in place. In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), a 2024 poll found that 90% of residents support the state's DRS.⁴ In the Republic of Ireland, a poll⁵ carried out in August 2024, just six months after the system was launched, showed that 74% of respondents were already in favour of the new programme. Long-standing systems also continue to enjoy broad backing: in Denmark, 92% of residents support the programme,⁶ which has been in operation since 2002, while in Massachusetts, where a DRS has been in place for over 40 years, a July 2024 poll measured support at 87%, with 56% showing "strong support."⁷

Public backing is also evident when it comes to modernising existing programmes. For example, a 2025 poll in New York found that a clear majority (61%) of respondents supported increasing the state's deposit level from USD\$0.05 to \$0.10.⁸ Similarly, a March 2024 poll⁹ in Ontario, Canada showed that 81% of residents support expanding the province's DRS, which currently covers only alcoholic beverages, to include non-alcoholic drinks. These results provide further evidence that people are not only satisfied with DRS but also willing to see them expanded and improved.

Global patterns in public support for DRS

Figure 1 shows median public support for DRS by region, based on polls conducted between 2003 and 2025. Jurisdictions in Oceania, including Australian states with DRS, show the strongest backing for programme expansion (92%), while Europe has the highest support for existing programme (91%). Support for introducing new programmes is fairly consistent, ranging from 78% in Europe to 85% in Oceania.

Shifting industry perspectives

It's not just the public that supports DRS, industry is increasingly coming on board as well. In Bulgaria, the Association of Soft Drink Producers (ASDPB) announced in July 2025¹⁰ its readiness to back a national system, with Executive Director Zhanna Velichkova noting that "such systems are among the most effective tools for packaging waste management."

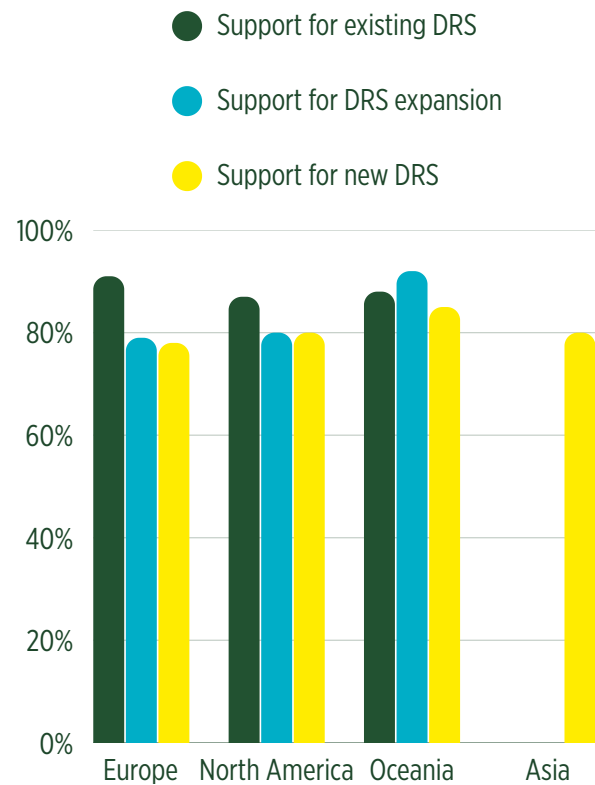


Figure 1 Median level of public support for DRS, by region
All figures based on polls conducted 2003-2025. Full data available upon request by Reloop.

In Canada, the Canadian Beverage Association has urged expansion of Ontario's programme beyond alcohol containers, pointing to strong polling results¹¹: "More than 80% of Ontarians want a deposit system for both alcohol and non-alcoholic beverage containers... The Government of Ontario must seize the opportunity to expand the existing deposit system... to keep these containers out of the environment and divert them from landfills to recycling facilities."

And in the US, groups such as the Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI) and the Aluminum Association have also become strong advocates. As CMI noted in a December 2024 report, deposit systems are the single most effective way to raise recycling rates, with a well-designed national programme estimated to boost aluminium can recycling by nearly 50 percentage points.¹²

Conclusion and further information

With consistent public approval and growing industry support, DRS stand out as one of the most effective ways to close the loop on beverage packaging. As more jurisdictions adopt or expand existing programmes, they will remain central to reducing waste, conserving resources, and addressing the triple planetary crisis.

For full details on all the opinion polls included in Reloop's analysis, please contact us. You can also view the February 2024 fact sheet [here](#).

Endnotes

- ¹ Gonzales Polls. January 2025. "Maryland Statewide Survey." Available at: <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/blog/2025/01/maryland-voters-express-overwhelming-support-beverage-container-deposit>
- ² The Mellman Group. 27 February 2025. "Public Support for a Bottle Bill in Rhode Island." Available at: <https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Bottle-Bill-Poll-Summary3.7.25.pdf>
- ³ Zero Waste Aotearoa. 10 September 2025. "New research shows all party's voters want a return scheme for empties." *Community Scoop*. Available at: <https://community.scoop.co.nz/2025/09/new-research-shows-all-partys-voters-want-a-return-scheme-for-empties/>
- ⁴ Intact and Reason Consumer Research (July 2024) as cited on Exchange for Change's website: <https://www.exchangeforchange.com.au/home.html#nsw-cds-performance-dashboard>
- ⁵ Re-turn. 1 August 2024. "Ireland's Deposit Return Scheme marks six months in operation." Available at: <https://re-turn.ie/irelands-deposit-return-scheme-marks-six-months-in-operation/>
- ⁶ Dansk Retursystem. 2024. "Årsrapport 2024." Available at: https://issuu.com/danskretursystem/docs/_rsrapport_2024
- ⁷ Beacon Research. 18 July 2024. "Findings from Statewide Survey of Massachusetts Voters." Available at: <https://just-zero.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Just-Zero-MA-Bottle-Bill-Poll-Results-and-Public-Memo.pdf>
- ⁸ Siena College Research Institute. 23 April 2025. "NY'ers are Divided on Energy Policy: 46% Say Restrict Fossil Fuel Usage Even if More Expensive, 43% Say Lower Energy Costs Even if Environment Affected." Available at: <https://scri.siena.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Earth-Day-2025-Release-Final.pdf>
- ⁹ Abacus Data. March 2024. "Environmental Defence Canada: Deposit Return Systems." Available at: <https://environmentaldefence.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/EDC-Deposit-Return-Systems-OMNI-March-2024-TC.pdf>
- ¹⁰ "Bulgaria's Beverage Industry Pushes for Nationwide Bottle Deposit System to Boost Recycling." 23 July 2025. Available at: <https://www.novinite.com/articles/233571/Bulgaria%E2%80%99s+Beverage+Industry+Pushes+for+Nationwide+Bottle+Deposit+System+to+Boost+Recycling>
- ¹¹ Canadian Beverage Association. 15 July 2024. "New Report Finds Expanding Ontario's Deposit System is the Most Effective Way to Increase Beverage Container Recovery." Available at: <https://canadianbeverage.ca/news-media/press-releases/new-report-finds-expanding-ontarios-deposit-system-is-the-most-effective-way-to-increase-beverage-container-recovery/>
- ¹² Toto, D. 5 December 2024. "Aluminum can recycling rate declines." *Recycling Today*. Available at: <https://www.recyclingtoday.com/news/aluminum-can-recycling-rate-declines/>