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Alberta launches Canada's first deposit-refund recycling program for milk containers

New regulations support provincial efforts to achieve an 85-per-cent recycle rate

Edmonton... Changes to the province's beverage container recycling program will encourage Albertans to return their empties to one of more than 200 collection sites in the province. New regulations make Alberta the first province in Canada to accept all milk cartons at bottle depot locations, as well as increase deposit-refunds on containers already in the program.

"Every beverage container in this province can be recycled into new and useful products," said Environment Minister Rob Renner. "Picture the plastic milk container in your fridge as a fleece jacket and the glass juice container as the insulation in your home."

With an average of two billion beverage containers sold in Alberta yearly, 500 million containers are not returned to a bottle depot for recycling. As part of the provincial *Too Good to Waste* strategy, Alberta's goal is to increase recycling rates to 85 per cent or higher, up from the current rate of 75 per cent.

"The 85-per-cent return rate is going to require cooperation and partnerships with all the stakeholders," said Ross Risvold, Chair of the Beverage Container Management Board. "I hope to establish real partnerships where programs to increase return rates are jointly developed with collection agents, the Alberta Bottle Depot Association, and the Beverage Container Management Board."

Under the updated program, Albertans will pay a deposit on all milk containers and will be able to drop off the containers at any Alberta bottle depot. The deposits on all beverage containers, including milk containers, will increase to 10 cents for containers one litre and under and 25 cents for containers greater than one litre. This is the first deposit increase in over 20 years.

"This is an exemplary opportunity to demonstrate our environmental leadership on the waste front, as we have done many times before," said Environment Parliamentary Assistant Diana McQueen. "With these changes, Alberta will have the most comprehensive beverage container recycling programs in North America, and will be the first to include all milk containers under the deposit system."

The deposit and option to return milk containers to Alberta bottle depots comes into effect June 1, 2009. Milk containers will continue to be recycled through community recycling programs until then. The deposit increases on all containers currently accepted at Alberta bottle depots, including pop, juice, beer, wine and spirit containers come into effect November 1.

For more information on Alberta's Beverage Container Recycling Program, visit bcmb.ab.ca. For more information on Alberta's *Too Good to Waste* strategy visit environment.alberta.ca

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