



Bottle Bill Expansion Town Hall Meeting



Grade Level: 6- 12

Time Needed: 45-60 minutes

Supplies: Containers: 5-cent deposits, sports drinks, teas, bottled water, juices

Location: Classroom

Objective: Students will first learn how Iowa's bottle bill currently works and which beverages it covers. We will then engage the students in a town hall style discussion of whether the state should expand the nickel deposit to include sports drinks, teas, bottled water and juice drinks.

Introduction: Ask the students what redemption means. What beverages are included in the bottle bill in Iowa? Show students the "Following the Nickel" overhead. Go over some of the meat of the current bottle bill. Answer questions.

Scenario: Your teacher has just been elected to the Iowa Legislature and is sponsoring a Town Hall meeting to discuss how citizens feel about proposed legislation to expand the bottle bill to include bottled water, sports drinks and other single-serving beverages.

Pass out character cards to the students. The categories are as follows:

- 2 Redemption Center Workers, 1 Redemption Center Owner
- Iowa Department of Transportation Workers (3 cards- One worker seeds ditches to prairie grass and wildflowers, another helps coordinate the Adopt-a-Highway program and the other worker spends a lot of time mowing near the rights-of-ways)
- Park Staff (1 each for a local City Park, County Park, and State Park)
- 3 Taxpayers
- Farmers (Buffalo Ranch Farmer, Soybean Farmer, Livestock Farmer- all who live right next to the state highway)
- Truck Drivers (Pepsi, Coke, Bottle Water Company)
- City Council Member, City Mayor, School Principal
- 3 County Supervisors
- Store Managers (Hy-Vee, Fareway, Super Wal-mart)

27 Characters as Listed

Depending on class size, there will be two-three students in each category. They will need to discuss what position their characters will take in regards to expanding the bottle bill. We will have bottle bill history handouts and articles from various magazines. We will also have newspaper articles on both sides of the issues, as well as former letters to the editors on the subject. The students will pick one group member to be the spokesperson for the group and present their view at the mock town hall meeting. They will tell the teacher whether their group would support the expansion of the bottle bill or would resist changes and why.

Wrap-Up: Tally which groups are for expansion and which ones are not.

Extensions:

- Research:

How many states have already expanded their deposit law to include sports drinks and bottled water?

How do other countries recycle single-serve beverage containers? What is their container recovery rate?

- Have the students write a letter to a local state representative or grocery store about their own personal thoughts about the bottle bill.

Iowa Bottle Bill History:

1978 Governor Ray signed the Beverage Container Redemption Legislation into law.

1979 Iowa Beverage Container Deposit Law takes effect.

1980 After a year, the Iowa DOT reported an overall litter reduction rate of 38%. Bottle and can litter was reduced by 79%.

In Iowa **95%** of all aluminum cans are recovered. (in non-bottle bill states, the rates average 25%.)

Iowa has a deposit container recovery rate of **92%**. Nebraska (no deposit law) recovers 24% of its bottles and cans.

In 1999, the states with Bottle Bills recycled more cans and bottles than the other 40 combined, (achieving an overall recovery rate of 71.6%). Compare that to the average rate of non-deposit states, (27.9%).

Those of us in bottle bill states recycle 55% of the soda and beer containers in the country, yet only represent 18% of the U. S. population.

Making an aluminum can from old cans (instead of bauxite ore) requires **95%** less energy and reduces air pollution by **95%**.

Each year the bottle bill provides over **1,200 jobs** in Iowa.

No Iowa grocery store has ever received a health citation related to the bottle bill.

The most recent survey (2003, from UNI's Center for Social and Behavioral Research) shows that support for Iowa's Bottle has increased since the last survey in 1998.

- The survey shows that **90.5% of Iowans strongly or mildly support the deposit law**. Support for expansion of the deposit also increased, from 72 to 76% of Iowans.

In May of 2002, Senator Jeffords (Vermont) introduced legislation that would hold the beverage industry responsible for increasing bottle and can recycling nationwide. He proposed a 10-cent refundable deposit on beverage containers, with the goal of recycling 80% of the nations containers.

Cost of Litter in IOWA: **\$13.5 million/year** (From KIB)