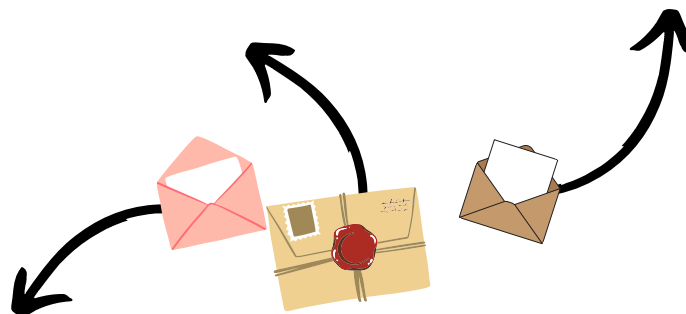


Richard Chambers, a logging equipment salesman, collected litter during his hiking, climbing and kayaking trips all around Oregon. “Litter drove him wild. He’d come back with all these bags and wave them and say, ‘Why do people have to do this?’” his daughter later told a writer.



In 1968, he called his Oregon Representative, Paul Hanneman who was also his friend. Mr. Chambers told his Representative that he had seen a newspaper article from British Columbia, Canada, wanting to ban non-refundable bottles and cans. Mr. Chambers wanted to add a deposit on bottles and cans to encourage people to return them to the store for their deposit back instead of banning them.

Mr. Chambers started a letter writing campaign using colorful stationary to attract attention of the people he was writing to so that they would open up the letter and not just throw it away. He also had people sign a petition to show support for the bill.



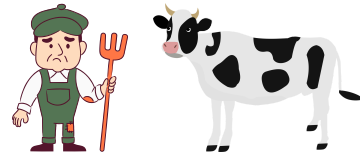


Oregon Bottle Bill Background Information

Fact Sheet

ORIGINS
GATEWAY

When they had enough support Oregon House Bill 1157 was written and Representative Paul Hanneman introduced it to the House of Representatives. A committee was formed to hear testimony on the bill. Mr. Chambers brought people in to testify for the bill, including a river guide to testify about all of the bottle and can containers that littered the water, he also brought a farmer who had lost four cows because they had ingested glass and metal pieces from bottles and cans thrown into his pastures.



The beverage companies fought the bill saying that it would cost their companies too much money. Mr. Chambers suggested that a five-cent deposit be put on each container to help with the price that the beverage companies would have to pay, but they would not give in and support the bill. The bill passed committee and went to the House of Representatives for a vote. The vote failed.



Mr. Chambers would not be stopped. He kept up his letter writing with the help of Don Waggoner, an environmental activist. More petitions were signed and a new bill was written. Once again, Representative Hanneman presented the bill to the House and a new committee was formed to give people a chance to testify in support or opposition to the bill. Most of the opposition to the bill were the grocery stores who felt that processing the bottles would be too expensive.

One store owner who helped the passage of the bill was John Piacentini, the owner of Plaid Pantry. He challenged people to return soda and beer bottles to his stores and he would give a half cent for every bottle or can they brought. Within two weeks people brought 150,000 cans to his stores and Governor McCall had to have the National Guard remove them.



This time with all of the support from the public the bill went for a new vote. Finally in 1971, the new Bottle Bill, House Bill 1036, passed and was signed by Governor Tom McCall.



(Written by Judith Lowery based on the information gathered from: Beverage Container Act. Author, Mark Henkels, oregonencyclopedia.com

Updated and Edited 2024 by Lacey Smith with additional information from: John, Finn J.D. "Offbeat Oregon History: Stubborn Citizen Teamed with Governor on Nation's First Bottle Bill." The Columbia County Chronicle and Chief, October 31, 2018.)