

Wine, liquor bottles can now be redeemed at California recycling centers

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Credit: Timur Saglambilek from Pexels

It may be Dry January for some, but a newly expanded recycling program could make it rain for Californians with empty wine and liquor bottles.

California recycling centers will now redeem wine and liquor bottles—as well as pouches, boxes and cartons—for cash as part of the state's Beverage Container Recycling Program.

Supporters say expanding the program to include wine and liquor bottles, which was authorized with the passage of Senate Bill 1013 in 2022, will help augment California's recycling efforts and divert more waste that otherwise might wind up in a landfill.

"Adding wine and spirits to California's Beverage Container Recycling Program cuts waste and pollution while providing more material for manufacturers to make new products as part of California's [circular economy](#)," Rachel Machi Wagoner, director of the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, said in a statement.

Starting this year, anyone purchasing wine or liquor will be charged an additional 5 cents for bottles less than 24 fluid ounces in volume and 10 cents for larger bottles. Other containers, such as plastic pouches, bags-in-a-box or cartons will be subject to an additional 25-cent charge. Prices in stores will be updated to reflect the increases.

For context, a common size for wine and liquor bottles is 750 ml—or a bit more than 25 fluid ounces.

The additional charges will offset the California Redemption Value paid out when these containers are recycled in the state.

Certain [beverage containers](#) made of glass, plastic, aluminum and bi-metal—such as beer bottles, soda cans and [water bottles](#)—were already included in the [program](#).

CalRecycle estimates the expansion will lead to an additional 1.1 billion bottles being recycled in the state annually.

"With SB 1013 we can increase the [recycling](#) rates of millions of bottles that would otherwise wind up in our landfills or be illegally discarded," state Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, said in a statement after the bill passed through the California Legislature.

An estimated 491 billion cans and bottles have been recycled in California since 1988 under the Beverage Container Recycling Program, including a record 19.5 billion in 2022, according to CalRecycle.

"One of the great things about glass is that it is 100% infinitely recyclable," said Nigel Dart, vice president of Gallo Glass Co., in a video released by CalRecycle.

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