News Release

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OLCC to Provide "Bottle Bill" Relief to Retailers

Agency Will Temporarily Halt Enforcement of Redemption Requirements

BottleDrop Redemption Sites Will Remain in Operation

PORTLAND, OR. – **Effective today,** the Oregon Liquor Control Commission will temporarily not take enforcement action against Oregon retailers for failing to accept empty beverage containers for redemption. During the temporary period, if stores don't take back empty beverage containers, the OLCC will not issue them a notice of violation.

Grocers and supermarkets are overwhelmed with an unprecedented volume of customers attempting to purchase provisions so they can spend time at home to help in the effort to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Supermarket and grocery retailers are short-staffed; like many other businesses and institutions their employees are also managing their own health and family issues during this challenging time. With the surge in consumer grocery shopping, food retail employees are working long hours to help customers as grocers prioritize their efforts on keeping shelves stocked.

The concerns about maintaining on-site redemption and collection areas is taking increasing amounts of time away from in store customer service, supply re-stocking, store cleaning, and managing social distancing. Stores have requested relief from bottle bill redemption in order to shift employees to focus on the unusually high customer traffic. Providing temporary relief through this action will allow grocers greater flexibility to more effectively manage and maintain a safe and healthy store environment.

The temporary action will be in place **through March 31, 2020**. BottleDrop redemption centers, operated by the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) will remain open. OBRC will also continue to operate BottleDrop Express drop sites, and Dealer Redemption Centers. The OLCC will continue to monitor the effects of this action and the impact on the grocery industry.

"This is an important way for us to assist these stores to serve the immediate shopping needs of thousands of citizens, and help contribute to reducing the spread of the outbreak," said OLCC Executive Director Steve Marks.

The OLCC is asking for the cooperation of all citizens through the duration of this temporary action. The agency has created an information flyer that provides details to locate all redemption center locations. Because not all communities have redemption centers, citizens are being asked to safely store bottles and cans until redemption services resume. The OLCC recognizes this is an inconvenience, but store redemption and collection environments need to be sanitarily maintained throughout this outbreak.

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