

# The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment

## Response to the Call for Evidence for a Deposit Return System for Scotland

The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE UK) is the trade association representing the three principal suppliers of paper-based beverage cartons to the UK market: Tetra Pak, SIG Combibloc and Elopak. It is also the recycling organisation for the beverage carton industry, with the following principal activities:

- working with local authorities and waste management companies to increase the quantity and quality of post-consumer beverage cartons collected;
- providing collection infrastructure in areas where local authorities do not collect beverage cartons at the kerbside;
- providing UK-based reprocessing facilities and creating market value for post-consumer beverage cartons, thus increasing collection.

For more information please see [www.ace-uk.co.uk](http://www.ace-uk.co.uk)

ACE UK is a member of The Packaging Recycling Group Scotland (PRGS) and fully endorses the PRGS response to the Call for Evidence. This clearly states why the PRGS believes that a DRS would not increase recycling rates and why it would only have a minimal impact on reducing litter.

There are also important additional points to make in relation to the recycling of beverage cartons specifically. These are set out below. As a responsible industry, the beverage carton sector – through ACE UK - has invested significantly in recycling in Scotland, and has made excellent progress. A DRS would jeopardise this.

**ACE UK therefore does not support the introduction of a DRS in Scotland.**

## Beverage carton collection in Scotland

Beverage carton collection in Scotland is a success story, having grown significantly in recent years through voluntary commitment and investment by the beverage carton industry, working together with local authorities.

- 22 of Scotland's 32 local authorities now include beverage cartons in their kerbside recycling collections. This will rise to 24 by the end of the year, or 75% of local authorities.
- 8 of the current 10 remaining local authorities collect beverage cartons using a bring-bank system, in all but one operated by ACE UK.
- In total 94% of local authorities in Scotland collect beverage cartons for recycling, compared to 92% for the UK as a whole.
- The UK's first dedicated beverage carton recycling plant was opened in 2013 in West Yorkshire by ACE UK working in partnership with Sonoco Alcore. The plant has the capacity to recycle 40% of all the beverage cartons used in the UK.

## Increasing beverage carton recycling

ACE UK's experience shows that the best way to increase recycling is to make it as easy as possible for the public to access collection systems and to increase awareness through better communication.

- Kerbside collection currently achieves a capture rate of about 60% for beverage cartons.
- Bring systems typically achieve a capture rate of 10%, depending on the number of banks and demographics.

ACE UK's approach is to help local authorities switch from bring to kerbside collection systems and to support local authority communications to residents, in order to increase quantity and quality of materials collected, by providing a range of materials and tools.

## A DRS would not increase recycling rates overall

It is not clear whether beverage cartons would be included in a DRS, but the introduction of a DRS would risk undermining the viability and extent of existing local authority kerbside recycling systems by reducing the overall volume of recyclate available to local authorities and by diverting the more valuable materials away. This would be to the detriment of recycling as a whole.

It would also make recycling less convenient for householders, particularly for older people and those without private transport, and could increase costs disproportionately for poorer households compared to those with access to transport. History has shown that retailer lead recycling services can have operational difficulties and stifle the range of accepted recyclates compared to existing kerbside services.

ACE UK believes that people can be motivated to recycle more by making it easier and more convenient for them to do so, and by providing them with good quality, accurate information on how and what they can recycle.

## A DRS focusing on beverage containers would have minimal impact on litter

ACE UK shares the concern of Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) that a DRS focusing on beverage containers would have minimal impact on litter. KSB data shows that beverage packaging of all types comprises just 6.4% of litter in Scotland, by number of items, and that beverage cartons comprise only 0.6%.

ACE UK believes that tackling litter requires a mix of innovative and positive ways to bring about behaviour change, collection infrastructure and enforcement, rather than a DRS which would instead focus on one minor component of litter.