

Our Ref: BNE1682-2
BNE2004/12198
E/04/03080
Your Ref: 358-04

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 1 September 2004 forwarding a copy of a petition received by the House on 31 August 2004 regarding the introduction of Container Deposit Legislation (CDL).

The CDL operating in South Australia is a deposit/refund scheme that applies to most beverage containers purchased and returned in South Australia. Introduced in the mid-1970's, CDL was originally used as a litter control mechanism and South Australia is the only State using this system.

Queensland is a large, decentralised State, making the introduction of any materials recovery schemes potentially difficult, including CDL and kerbside collection systems. CDL, like many recovery programs, is infrastructure intensive. To be successful, it relies on a network of collection depots to handle the returns.

One of the issues associated with collection depots is siting. In order to be convenient, depots need to be sited at reasonable distances for people to travel. However, in South Australia, depots in urban areas are finding it more and more difficult to gain approval for expansions and improvements due to nuisance factors such as noise.

CDL has never been introduced into a State that already has a well-established kerbside recycling system and the impacts on this system would need to be fully investigated. Currently, in Queensland, over 90 percent of the population has access to some form of household recycling service. If CDL were introduced, the two systems would compete for much of the same recyclable materials.

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Another aspect of CDL is that it focuses on recovery of the material after it has served its intended purpose, while doing little to promote waste avoidance and sustainability.

New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria have investigated CDL. The reviews returned mixed conclusions from each jurisdiction. For instance, the review conducted for New South Wales indicated the benefits would exceed the costs, but in Victoria the review indicated that the introduction of a parallel CDL system with the existing kerbside recycling system would incur substantially increased costs to the community.

There is agreement among jurisdictions that CDL should be considered at the national level. High trans-boundary movements of people between States means that containers purchased in one State may be returned to a collection depot in another State.

As Queensland has not undertaken a review of the impacts of the introduction of CDL, work would need to be carried out to determine whether or not it is an appropriate mechanism to apply. Information from various forums indicates that the attitudes in Queensland are similar to those in New South Wales, with a high percentage of support from the community, and opposition from the beverage, packaging and retail industries.

Local government in Queensland supports CDL in principle, contingent on further analysis of all options available and on the understanding that any such scheme would need to be applied at the national level.

I hope this information is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

Desley Boyle MP
Minister for Environment
Minister for Local Government and Planning
Minister for Women