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## Redemption Facilities Leave Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini



Where will Bill Durkin have to go to redeem his glass and aluminum? Photo Sophie Braccini

good example of the efficiency of redeeming the California Refund Value (CRV) monies through local drop-off centers.

The intent of the program when it was instituted in 1986 was to get 80% of glass and aluminum containers recycled. The California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act ("Act"), requires that every beverage container sold or offered for sale in this state have a minimum refund value. A distributor is required to pay a redemption payment for every beverage container sold or offered for sale in the state to the Department of Conservation and the department is required to deposit those amounts in the California Beverage Container Recycling Fund. The money in the fund is continuously appropriated to the department to pay refund values, administrative fees to processors, and a reserve for contingencies. At this time the CRV is \$.05 for each container of less than 24-ounce capacity and \$.10 for each container of 24-ounces or greater capacity. The bi-annual report of the State of California Department of Conservation established in November of 2009 indicates an 85% recycling rate for beverage containers.

Some supermarkets not served by parking-lot recyclers redeem the containers themselves. When contacted by telephone, the local Safeways either declined to confirm whether their stores would refund the containers, or indicated that they would not and were now directing customers to Pleasant Hill where the store at 600 Patterson (@ Oak Park) still has a recycling center.

Durkin urges all residents to either visit a recycle center, or use their brown recycle container for recycling bottles and containers. "We should not allow politics to raze the sustainability efforts in our state," he said.

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The last time Bill Durkin went to Safeway in Moraga to recycle and get a refund for his glass bottles and cans he found an unpleasant surprise: The recycling center that had been operating at the rear of the parking lot, giving back nickels and dimes to conscientious consumers, was gone. In its place he found a flyer from NexCycle, the recycling operator, explaining the disappearance. He found the same situation in Lafayette.

The facts are that the once-exemplary California recycling program is now plagued with debt and litigation. The flyer left by NexCycle reads: "Due to California Administration borrowing over \$481 million dollars from the beverage container redemption fund...the convenience of parking lot recycling centers has closed." NexCycle is one of the two largest operators who have jointly announced the shutdown of 90 centers. They have joined with other firms to sue the State in an effort to stop the dismantling of the program. According to the Sacramento Bee, the state has borrowed beverage funds four times in the past decade; during the current fiscal year, more than \$99 million was diverted to the State's general fund.

Durkin, who is a member of Sustainable Moraga, a local advocacy group, feels that the success of this recycling program has provided a