

We asked Californians about their experience recycling and redeeming bottles and cans:

Mendocino County

"The cash by takeback of bottles and cans disappeared from our rural community several years ago. The result was that these items along the road were no longer picked up by people collecting them to make extra cash. This move was not explained, it just happened seemingly overnight." - Gail

"I used to collect and redeem the CRV but my town got rid of the redemption center so I would have to drive really far to do it now which is **not worth it! No stores take them.** Recycling in general has gotten a lot harder!" - Karina

Yolo County

"I contacted the City of Davis recycling coordinator. She told me that retailers can pay a \$100.00 fee to avoid taking in any CRV. That seems to be the gap that needs to be filled." - Gayna

Alameda County

"The email I received from The Story of Stuff mentioned that in theory, **bottles should be as easy to return as they are to purchase.** Then, I wonder, why aren't they?" - Arielle

"Three nearby spots... **inconvenient** to get to and require a separate trip from our usual outings in a different direction." -T.L.

San Bernardino County

"I put them in the blue bin...I have **no idea where recycling machines are now. They all went away.**" - Eric

Los Angeles County

"I've wanted to redeem cans for cash, but **it's a pain** to find a place to accept them. The one place I knew of near me closed a couple years ago." - Meagen

"I would love to but there are no locations in my region to recycle. Everything goes into the blue bin because **I have no other option.**" - Scott

"I would love to get my deposits back myself, but it is too much bother. In NY and CT I know people who take them to machines at their local supermarket and easily redeem there. **Why doesn't California have those??**" - Kae

"I used to bring my cans and bottles in for recycling, but all of the services disappeared from my local grocery stores and small recycling centers. Now I would have to drive half an hour -- **not worth the gas or the \$ return. It's such a shame.**" - Gia

"I'm old enough to have returned bottles for money when I was a kid, it was easy. You just returned the bottles to the store you bought them from and got a little cash. Now I just use the blue bin." - Sherrell

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Humboldt County

"Where we live now there is not a recycle center in the entire county AND the only store that takes them has a limit as to how many you can return and they don't make even that easy so we just throw them in the recycle bin. **It's disappointing.**" - Marabeth

"There are no facilities near my location and there have been none in all of Humboldt County for the duration of the pandemic." - Carol

Marin County

"There's **no where convenient** to return bottles etc. I'm in an urban area. **It's ridiculous.**" - Suzie

Sonoma County

"It's getting harder to find redemption centers." - Bob

"Generally, I don't bother because I've heard it's difficult. I do take milk bottles back to Good Earth because the farmers want them back and I've never had a problem with returning them." -Joan

Santa Clara County

"It's become harder to redeem for bottle deposits, so **recyclables that have value unfortunately go in the blue bin.**" - Justin

San Mateo County

"It's been difficult since the pandemic. My local cash back recycling location in San Carlos has not reopened after stay-at-home orders were lifted." - Chenna

"It is a crime that the state takes the money up front with **few to no places to redeem.**" - A.M.

"Years ago when I lived in another state (IA) I'd take bottles and cans to the grocery store to redeem them for cash. Here in CA (almost 4 years now) I've always put my cans/bottles in my bin for pickup **foregoing the deposit \$.** I don't even know of anywhere I could take them to redeem them for cash." - Lisa

Orange County

"It has been **harder to find places to redeem** for bottle deposits. The line and wait make it not worth to redeem." - Jenny

"I did recycle near my local grocery store, but a few years ago all the recycle locations closed and I was unable to recycle my cans. Now some recycling centers are opened, but I do not recycle due to lack of storage. **Recycling needs to be easier for customers. For example, take them to a grocery to receive your refund.**" - Kim

"The recycling centers that used to be located in grocery parking lots have closed. Now have to go to a center that is further away and very busy (there aren't too many left.)" - Michelle

THE STORY OF
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Butte County

"I have begun to save my CRV but, alas, **there is no local place to redeem them.**"
-Tracy

"When I was a kid did it with my parents at the grocery store. Very easy. In college tried and they didn't accept most things. These days (+10 more years) **can't find anywhere that will take bottles in my small town.**"
- Lauryn

"We used to have several buy back locations in our community but **they have all closed** in the last 5 years and now the closest redemption center is 25 miles away. All of them were closed because it did not make sense financially to operate them under the current structure of the state's bottle program. To my knowledge, **most grocery stores and retailers are not participating** either and it's very challenging, usually impossible, to redeem containers through them." - Mandi

San Francisco County

"Yes I have done this, over 10 years ago. I was **appalled by the dismal amount of places to take them**, and the hours were not good. From what I have heard, **it is even harder now to redeem** for bottle deposits." - Emanuel

Contra Costa County

"There used to be multiple, convenient locales to redeem for cash. None of these locations now exist in my town or any of the towns bordering mine." - Pat

Santa Cruz County

"**Frustrated** with no local access to a recycling center near by. I have to drive to Watsonville" - Richard

"We need easier ways to redeem bottles for cash, like machines at grocery stores, laundromat etc that take items and return cash...**Frustrating to not have an option at a retail store where I shop.**"
- Angelie

San Diego County

"I was **disappointed** to find in San Diego that, instead of taking them with to my weekly grocery shop, I'd instead have to haul them over to Miramar Recycling Center. Since that isn't in a convenient location and I don't have the space for storing large amounts of empty bottles and cans, I instead toss them in the blue bin. **Very frustrating to literally throw money away.**" - Kelsey

"I have in the past redeemed our recycling at a recycling center. However, it recently closed and the next nearest one is ~8 miles away so now I am not able to!! I was not aware supermarkets etc. were legally responsible for taking back recyclables. None take any back in my area so far as I am aware. **Taking back recycling MUST be enforced!**" - C.S.