

# Waste & Opportunity

U.S. Beverage Container  
Recycling Scorecard and Report, 2008

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# Executive Summary

Despite some significant progress in individual areas, no beverage company emerged as the clear environmental packaging leader in all categories. Too many beverage companies continue to score poorly in all environmental aspects of our beverage container environmental scorecard. Seven companies received “0” in every category and are thus only listed in Appendix A.

## U.S. Beverage Container Recycling Scorecard, 2008

Scorecard	Total GPA	Overall Grade	Source Reduction	Recycled Content	Recovery & Recycling	Transparency
Coca-Cola*	2.02	C	C	C+	C-	D+
Anheuser Busch*	1.71	C-	C+	D+	C-	D
Pepsi Co*	1.59	C-	C	C	D-	F
Nestle Waters, NA*	1.58	C-	C	F	C+	D-
Red Bull*	1.55	D+	D+	B	D-	F
Fiji Water*	1.00	D	F	D-	D+	B+
Honest Tea*	0.61	D-	D+	D-	F	F
National Beverage	0.48	F	C-	F	F	F
Miller Brewing Company	0.44	F	D	F	F	F
Coors Brewing Company	0.43	F	F	D-	F	F
Monarch Beverage	0.42	F	F	D+	F	F
Dr. Pepper/Snapple	0.41	F	D	D-	F	D
Cott	0.30	F	D	F	F	F
Hansens	0.30	F	D	F	F	F
Starbucks	0.20	F	F	F	F	F
Crystal Geyser	0.08	F	F	F	F	F

\* indicates responded to survey<sup>2</sup>

Best possible grade is 4.0. A description of the methodology is in Appendix A.

## Key Findings

- In this second survey, Coca-Cola Company outranks its beverage industry peers overall. The firm is a leader in its commitments and performance on beverage container source reduction, company-wide recovery goals, and in investments in recycling programs. Coca-Cola is building a large recycling plant in South Carolina to grow availability of recycled PET plastic, appears to have the lightest 20-ounce PET carbonated soda bottle, and reports the highest percentage of recycled content in its aluminum cans. However, Coca-Cola lags PepsiCo on use of recycled content resin in PET beverage containers.
- Nestlé Waters North America showed the greatest improvement since publication of the 2006 Scorecard. Nestlé introduced its Eco-Shape® bottle, which uses the least packaging per unit of beverage for 0.5 litre containers (16.9 ounces) – the most popular size of water bottles consumed in the U.S. – and recently set an industry-wide goal of recycling 60% of PET bottles by 2018. Nestlé, along with Fiji Water, has also expressed public support for a legislative solution to significantly boost container recovery rates (a container redemption program similar to that of California). Nestlé has yet to use any recycled content in its PET bottles.

- PepsiCo reports the highest percentage use of recycled PET in its bottles, 10%. Unfortunately, PepsiCo has yet to commit to a company-specific or industry-wide beverage container recovery goal, or disclose a plan to significantly and sustainably raise beverage container recovery rates.
- Anheuser Busch has the most successful company-wide recycling program, processing five cans for every four it produces, yet it does not take the lead in recycled content. Anheuser Busch uses the standard industry ingots where both Coca-Cola and Red Bull report that they exceed the standard in their use of recycled aluminum.
- In addition to support for strong public policy on recycling, Fiji Water has the most clear and comprehensive webpages addressing container recycling. It has set admirable goals, but at the same time uses the most packaging per ounce of beverage among its major peers.
- Dr. Pepper/Snapple, maker of *7-up* and *Canada Dry* and the third largest marketer of soft drinks in the U.S, does not have beverage container recycling goals or programs to significantly boost container recycling rates, and is the largest beverage firm not to respond to our survey. Given its size and prominence, Dr. Pepper/Snapple needs to directly engage stakeholders and consumers.
- Neither of the next largest beverage companies Cott nor National Beverage participated in the survey or publicly disclosed information on recovery and recycling or use of recycled content.

## Recommendations

As You Sow's research finds that in order to minimize the use of natural resources, boost U.S. energy security, and positively address climate concerns, all beverage companies should:

- Commit to source reduction and improved recyclability of beverage containers
- Commit to using the highest possible levels of post consumer recycled content in beverage containers
- Commit to a set of measurable, sustainable, national and company-specific goals to recover at least 70% of beverage containers
- Support public policies that significantly increase the recycling of beverage containers
- Commit sufficient human and financial resources to be able to deliver on beverage container recycling commitments
- Publicly report on their beverage container recycling progress each year

This report is organized into five chapters: source reduction, recycled content, beverage container recycling, transparency, and recommendations. Each chapter addresses a key element of beverage packaging recycling.

We understand that the larger beverage companies have more resources available for sustainability, recycling, and climate change initiatives. Nevertheless, small companies such as Red Bull have made significant commitments to using recycled aluminum, and Fiji Water has made a notable endorsement of container deposit legislation that would significantly boost beverage container recycling. As You Sow encourages smaller beverage companies to continue to increase their commitments to source reduction, container recovery, use of recycled content, and industry-wide program goals and push existing industry standards.

## As You Sow

Through capital markets, shareholder leverage and innovative legal strategies, As You Sow is transforming corporate behavior and creating a more socially and environmentally just society.

As You Sow is a non-profit social change organization dedicated to promoting corporate accountability, social justice, and environmental protection. The Corporate Social Responsibility Program is one of the nation's leading proponents of shareholder advocacy. As You Sow represents shareholders in dialogues with corporations to promote more responsible policies. As You Sow is based in San Francisco, California. <http://asyousow.org/>

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