

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5008

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Energy, Environment & Telecommunications, February 19, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to beverage containers.

**Brief Description:** Concerning beverage containers.

**Sponsors:** Senator Angel.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Energy, Environment & Telecommunications: 1/22/15, 2/19/15 [DP, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Ericksen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Braun, Brown and Honeyford.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators McCoy, Ranking Minority Member; Cleveland, Habib and Ranker.

**Staff:** Jan Odano (786-7486)

**Background:** In 1982 the Legislature found detachable metal rings or tabs from beverage containers were susceptible to swallowing by people and harmful to certain wildlife. Because of this hazard to human health and detriment to wildlife, the Legislature established a prohibition on the sale of metal beverage cans opened by a detachable metal ring or tab.

This prohibition applies to beer or other malt beverages, mineral water, soda water, or other liquid drinks meant for human consumption. The term beverage does not include milk-based, soy-based, or other similar products that require heat and pressure in the canning process. Over 30 states have enacted similar prohibitions on detachable metal rings or tabs from beverage containers.

Openings for beer cans and other beverages evolved over the years. Early metal beverage cans were made from steel and were opened by using a church key to punch a hole into the top. The pull tab was invented in 1963. This tab was entirely removable from the can. It was widely criticized as a component of litter and causing injuries to people and wildlife.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The stay-on tab was invented in 1975. This new type of tab opening supplanted the pull tab in cans. Beverage can openings continue to evolve to address restricted flow. Cans with wider tab openings and additional openings to allow greater air flow are being used by some beverage container companies. A pull tab that removes the entire lid, leaving an opening as wide as the can, is also available.

**Summary of Bill:** Beer or other malt beverages are not included in the definition of the term beverage.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This type of lid allows a can to be turned into a cup. It eliminates the need for a cup and concerns with trash. There are no sharp edges on the lids or can after the lid is removed. The lid contains less aluminum than other similar lids. Beer cans with removable lids such as these allows the beer drinker to enjoy the aromatics of the beer. Educational information is printed on the lid to dispose of the lid properly and to not litter.

CON: The current law decreases litter and enhances recycling. The current aluminum can is environmentally friendly and designed for recycling. It is important to have a non-detachable lid so that the entire can is recycled. Small detachable parts fall through the screens at recycling centers and become trash. This undermines sustainable packaging.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Mike Runion, 7 Seas Brewing; Greg Stimpert, Crown Cork & Seal.

CON: Suellen Mele, Zero Waste WA.