In the fall of 2015, Sean Haberman's Global History class worked with Teaching Artist Leon Anthony James at the Academy of Urban Planning in Bushwick to find out more about the New York State Returnable Container Act, a.k.a., the Bottle Bill. This law was created to reduce litter and encourage recycling, but how does it impact our communities? Some think it’s helpful while others find the bill to be a burden. Students created this postcard to share what they learned about the life of a bottle and the players in this debate.

**CHECK:***
Look on any bottle under 1 gallon for a label to see if it can be returned for 5¢.

**BUY:** Purchase a drink and a 5¢ deposit can be added to the price of the bottle. Throwing a bottle away is like throwing away a nickel.

**REDEEM:** Return the bottle to where it was bought and get the 5¢ deposit back. Places called Redemption Centers will also pay, sort, and store the redeemed empty bottles.

**RECYCLE:** Manufacturers pay back the 5¢ plus 3.5¢ per bottle as a handling fee. All the empty bottles are taken to be recycled.

**SORT:** Redemption Centers group the bottles by their manufacturer. Each manufacturer is responsible for picking up their own bottles and paying back the retailer or Redemption Center.

**RECYCLE:** People all over New York City are pushing shopping carts full of bottles, but why? Where are they going with those cans?
Canners: People who collect and redeem the 5¢ deposits are called canners. Canners can earn anywhere from less than $1 to over $100 per day of tax-free income. This can be a hobby or a full-time job.

Consumers: It can be inconvenient to save and return a bottle for the 5¢ deposit. Curbside recycling bins are easier, but recycling centers don’t give back bottle deposits.

Legislators: New York is 1 of 10 states that have the Bottle Bill. State Senator Liz Krueger wants to increase the value from 5¢ to 10¢.

Redemption Centers: 60% of recyclable bottles and cans are collected by canners, versus 15% collected by curbside recycling. “We not only help create honest, recycling—We not only help create honest, hardworking jobs but also a community center for empowerment.” Ana Martinez de Luco, Sure We Can

Manufacturers: If a bottle is not collected by a canner, 80% of the unredeemed bottle money goes to the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance and 20% to the manufacturer.

Community Members: Canners can clean up a neighborhood or add more noise while searching for bottles. Find a community board to share your opinion at http://www.nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/cb.shtml

WHAT’S AT STAKE IN THE BOTTLE BILL DEBATE?

To find out more visit dec.ny.gov

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