

NEWS RELEASE

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Beverage and Grocery Spending Key to Repeal of Columbia's Deposit Law

Columbia, MO. (April 3, 2002) – Voters approved repeal of Columbia's Deposit Ordinance on April 2nd, after what local leaders say may be the most expensive single-issue campaign in the city's history. A national environmental and research organization, the Container Recycling Institute, says that beverage and grocery industry spending was key to the election outcome.

“Deposit supporters – Columbians Against Throwaways and the Container Recycling Institute – were vastly outspent by the Prop 1 campaign,” Pat Franklin, executive director of the Container Recycling Institute said in a ‘morning after’ assessment of the campaign.

“Soft drink, beer and grocery spending allowed the Prop 1 supporters to reach every registered voter in Columbia several times, through mailings, television, radio and newspaper advertising,” Franklin said.

The Container Recycling Institute is a national, nonprofit research and education organization based in Arlington, Virginia. CRI advocates policies that eliminate beverage container waste and litter, by holding manufacturers and consumers responsible for used packaging.

The *Columbia Missourian* quotes Hank Ottinger, co-chair of Columbians Against Throwaways, saying, “What disturbs me most is the extent to which democracy is corrupted by money. I believe this will go down as the most expensive single-issue campaign in the history of the city.”

CRI Senior Policy Analyst Lance King said, “From a campaign perspective, Prop 1 supporters gained the upper hand in Columbia by defining the issues early. While we believe the voters were presented a false choice between deposits and ‘Blue Bag’ curbside recycling, the beverage and grocery companies gained an advantage by coming out early and flooding the paid and free media with their message.”

The vote in Columbia yesterday is the first time a beverage container deposit law has been repealed in the United States. “Unlike repeal attempts in deposit states, the impact of spending by repeal supporters was magnified in Columbia. Repeal advocates got more bang for the buck in this relatively small city,” Franklin said.