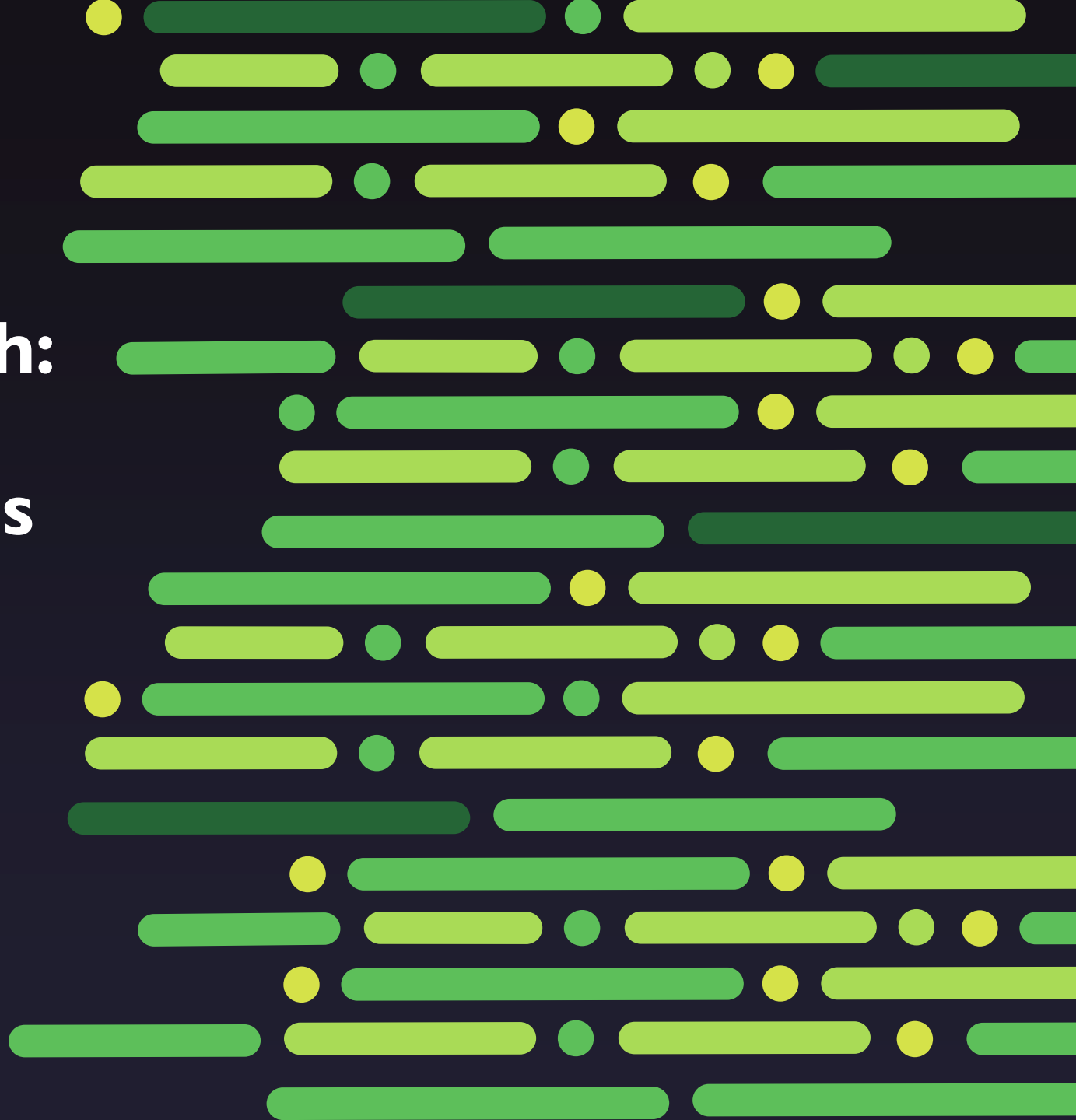


# Public Opinion Research: Beverage Container Deposit Return Systems in Ontario

Environmental Defence

OMNI Results

April 2026



# Methodology

- Sample size: 1,000 Ontarians ages 18+
- Survey field dates: April 16 to 22, 2026.
- Margin of error: (+/-) ~3.10%, 19 times out of 20.
- The data was weighted by age, gender, education, and region.
- Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- Figures shown in **red** indicate results that are statistically significantly lower, while figures shown in **green** indicate results that are statistically significantly higher.



## Executive Summary

**Public opinion supports the expansion of deposit return systems in Ontario.** Nearly 8 in 10 Ontarians (79%) support introducing a system for non-alcoholic drink containers, with support cutting across age, region, and political affiliation and little outright opposition (9%). Notably, support is higher among those who approve of the provincial government (85%).

**When it comes to system design, Ontarians prioritize convenience and simplicity.** A strong majority (69%) prefer a single, unified system where all drink containers can be returned to the same place, while only 12% prefer separate systems and 20% are unsure or indifferent. This preference is consistent across groups.

**At the same time, Ontarians are not prescriptive about how the system operates but rather want flexibility.** The most preferred model is one that includes both retail locations and depots (40%), and majorities are open to each option - 63% are open to depots (depot + both) and 57% are open to retail returns (retail + both).

**Overall, there is strong public support (79%) for expanding deposit return systems, provided they are designed to be simple (69% prefer one system), convenient, and flexible (40% prefer both return options).**

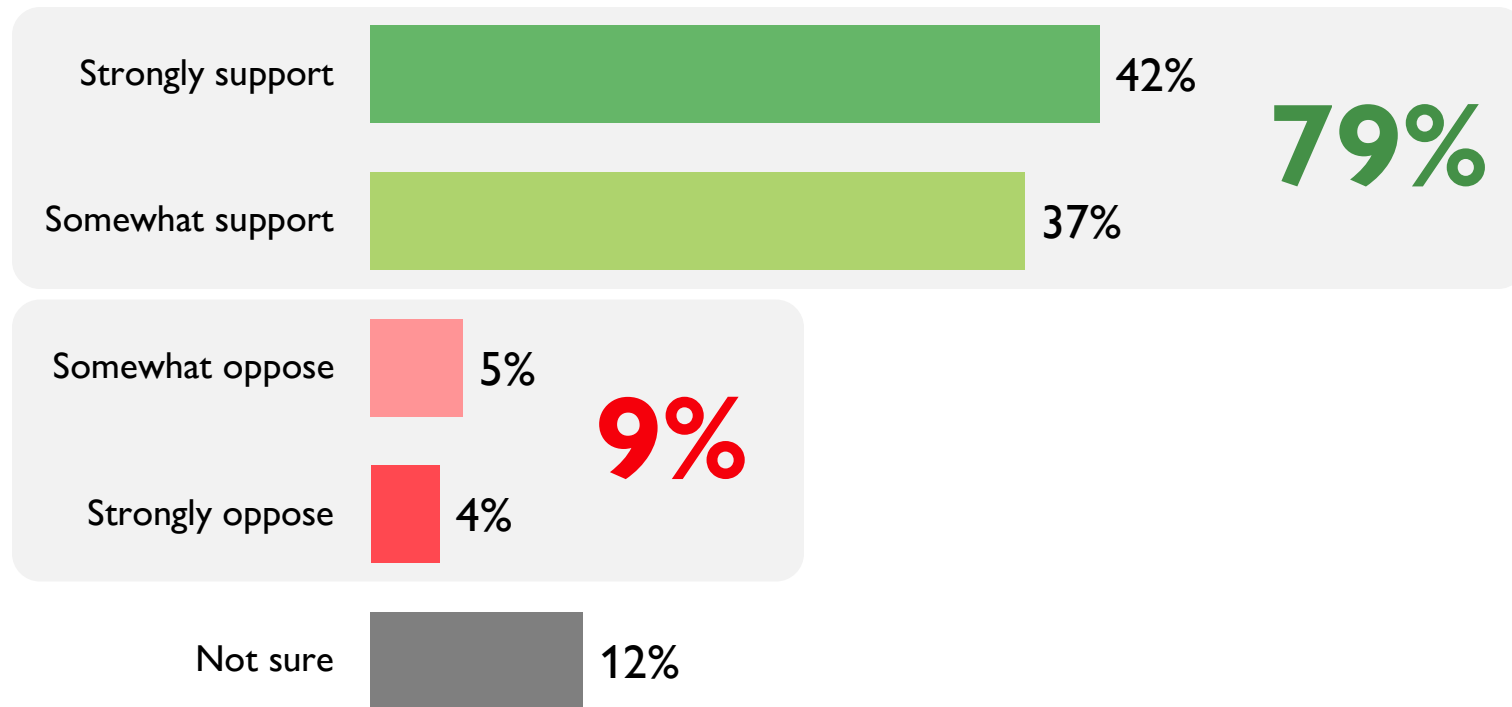
# Detailed Results





To what extent do you support or oppose the establishment of a Deposit Return System in Ontario for **non-alcoholic** drink containers?

## 8 in 10 Ontarians (79%) support the establishment of a Deposit Return System in Ontario for non-alcoholic drink containers.



Base: All respondents (n=1,000)



To what extent do you support or oppose the establishment of a Deposit Return System in Ontario for **non-alcoholic** drink containers?

**Support is high across all groups, with higher support among men (84% vs. 73% of women), greater uncertainty among women (16% vs. 8% of men), and higher support among those who approve of the provincial government (85%).**

	TOT.	AGE				GENDER		REGION					2025 VOTE			COMMITTED VOTE			PROV. GOVERNMENT		
		18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Male	Female	Toronto	GTHA	East	SW	North	PCPO	OLP	ONDP	PCPO	OLP	ONDP	Approve	Neither	Disapprove
<b>[NET] SUPPORT</b>	<b>79%</b>	80%	74%	79%	81%	<b>84%</b>	<b>73%</b>	77%	76%	81%	86%	75%	76%	85%	80%	77%	82%	83%	<b>85%</b>	70%	78%
Strongly support	<b>42%</b>	<b>30%</b>	40%	46%	46%	42%	41%	37%	40%	47%	42%	52%	39%	46%	45%	39%	47%	46%	42%	35%	44%
Somewhat support	<b>37%</b>	<b>50%</b>	34%	33%	35%	<b>42%</b>	<b>32%</b>	41%	36%	33%	44%	23%	37%	39%	36%	38%	35%	37%	43%	34%	34%
Somewhat oppose	<b>5%</b>	9%	4%	4%	5%	4%	6%	6%	8%	3%	2%	4%	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%	3%	5%	8%	5%
Strongly oppose	<b>4%</b>	2%	6%	6%	2%	3%	4%	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	5%	2%	7%	4%
<b>[NET] OPPOSE</b>	<b>9%</b>	11%	10%	10%	7%	8%	11%	11%	11%	8%	6%	6%	10%	7%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	14%	9%
Not sure	<b>12%</b>	9%	16%	10%	12%	<b>8%</b>	<b>16%</b>	12%	13%	12%	9%	19%	15%	8%	11%	14%	10%	8%	8%	16%	13%

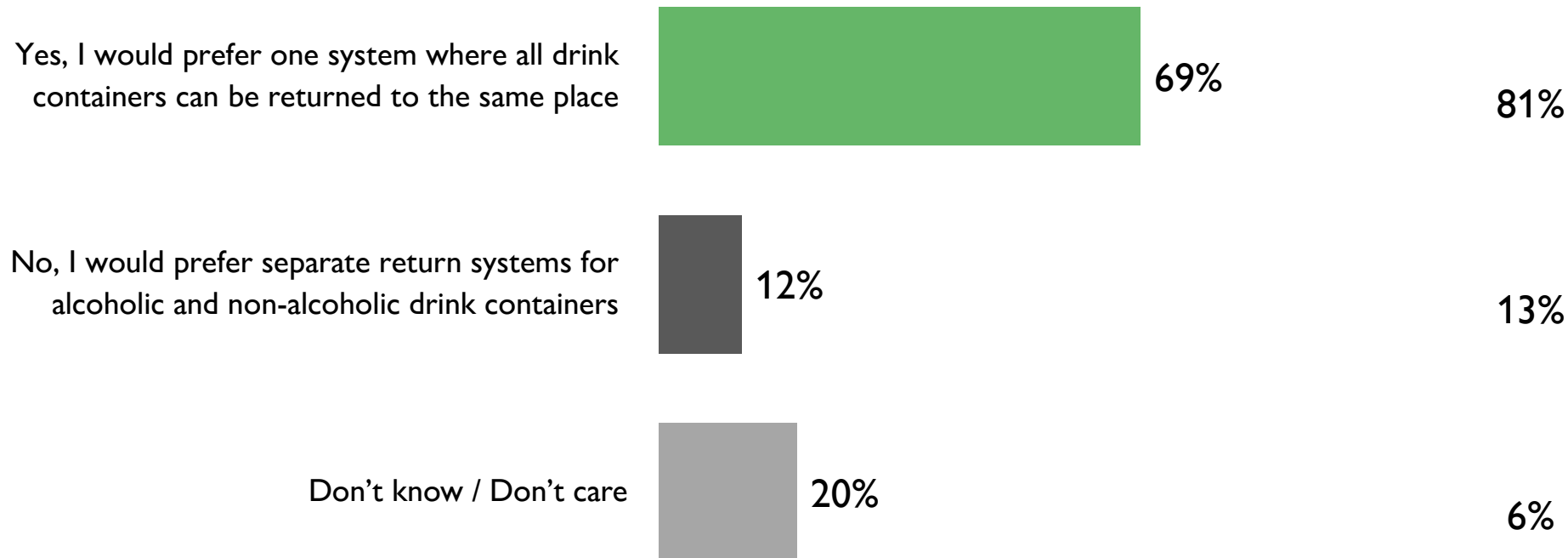
Base: All respondents (n=1,000)



Would you prefer that all drink containers (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) be included in a single deposit return program, whereby you can return both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink containers at the same time to the same place?

**Nearly 7 in 10 (69%) prefer a single system that allows all drink containers to be returned to the same location, and, among those who support establishing a deposit return system, this rises to 81%. Notably, 1 in 5 (20%) either don't know or care where drink containers would be returned.**

Preference among supporters of the establishment of a Deposit Return System in Ontario for non-alcoholic drink containers



Base: All respondents (n=1,000)



Would you prefer that all drink containers (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) be included in a single deposit return program, whereby you can return both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink containers at the same time to the same place?

## Preference for a single system where all drink containers can be returned to the same place remains consistent across demographic and political groups.

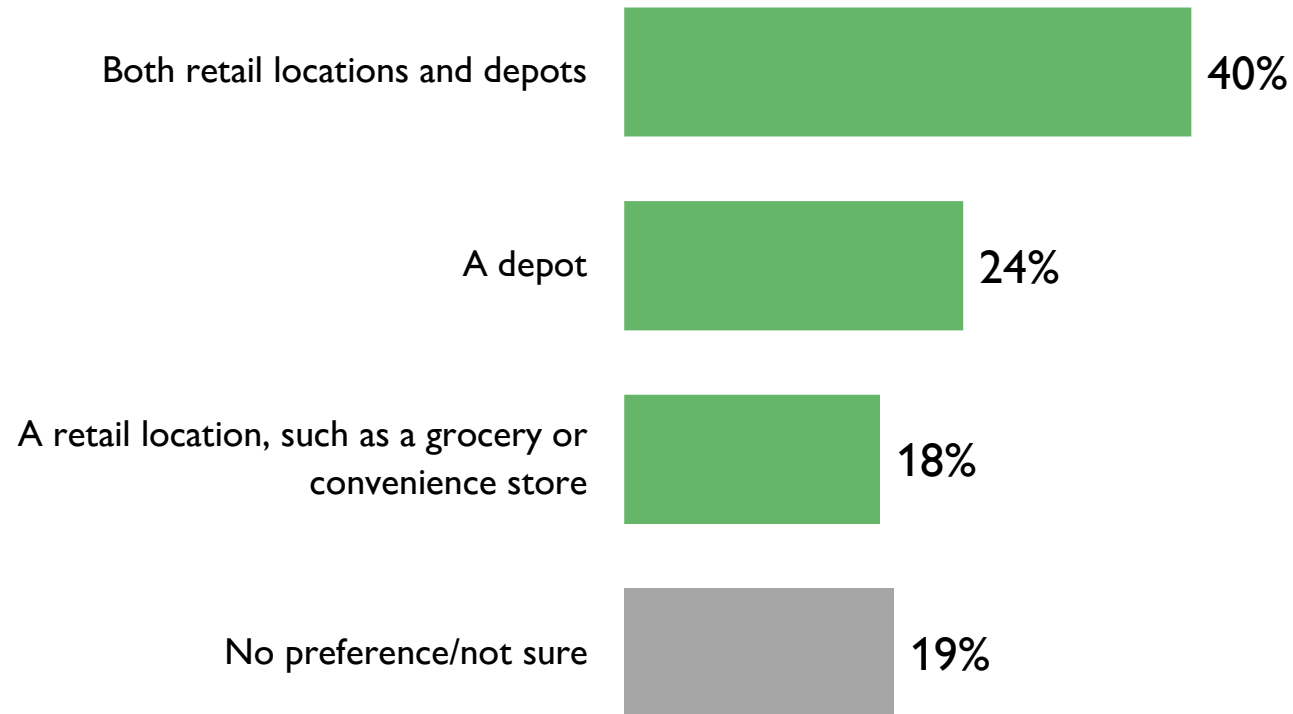
	TOT.	AGE				GENDER		REGION					2025 VOTE			COMMITTED VOTE			PROV. GOVERNMENT		
		18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Male	Female	Toronto	GTHA	East	SW	North	PCPO	OLP	ONDP	PCPO	OLP	ONDP	Approve	Neither	Disapprove
Yes, I would prefer one system where all drink containers can be returned to the same place	<b>69%</b>	68%	64%	67%	74%	70%	67%	74%	70%	67%	80%	73%	70%	79%	66%	70%	75%	75%	75%	68%	73%
No, I would prefer separate return systems for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink containers	<b>12%</b>	16%	16%	12%	6%	13%	11%	13%	14%	21%	12%	11%	15%	11%	20%	16%	13%	14%	15%	16%	13%
Don't know/don't care	<b>20%</b>	16%	20%	21%	20%	17%	22%	12%	16%	12%	8%	16%	15%	10%	14%	14%	12%	11%	9%	16%	14%

Base: All respondents (n=1,000)



Eight out of 10 provinces in Canada have Deposit Return Systems for both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage containers. Some provinces require that the consumer return empty containers to depots—large purpose-built facilities—to receive their deposit refund. Other systems require retailers that sell beverages (grocery stores, convenience stores, etc.) to accept empty containers and provide deposit refunds to consumers. Would you prefer to return empty beverage containers to:

**Most Ontarians are open to both depots (63%, depot + both) and retail locations (57%, retail + both), with the strongest preference for a flexible system that includes both (40%).**



Base: All respondents (n=1,000)



Eight out of 10 provinces in Canada have Deposit Return Systems for both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage containers. Some provinces require that the consumer return empty containers to depots—large purpose-built facilities—to receive their deposit refund. Other systems require retailers that sell beverages (grocery stores, convenience stores, etc.) to accept empty containers and provide deposit refunds to consumers. Would you prefer to return empty beverage containers to:

## Preferences for return locations are broadly consistent across demographic and political groups, with most favouring systems that include both depots and retail locations.

	TOT.	AGE				GENDER		REGION					2025 VOTE			COMMITTED VOTE			PROV. GOVERNMENT		
		18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Male	Female	Toronto	GTHA	East	SW	North	PCPO	OLP	ONDP	PCPO	OLP	ONDP	Approve	Neither	Disapprove
A depot	24%	20%	21%	25%	27%	25%	22%	6%	13%	16%	16%	20%	16%	11%	10%	15%	11%	13%	12%	13%	14%
A retail location, such as a grocery or convenience store	18%	24%	19%	15%	15%	19%	17%	28%	25%	17%	25%	9%	23%	25%	17%	24%	25%	20%	29%	23%	19%
Both retail locations and depots	40%	41%	42%	38%	38%	39%	40%	54%	46%	50%	48%	47%	48%	50%	52%	48%	49%	54%	48%	47%	50%
No preference/not sure	19%	16%	17%	22%	20%	16%	21%	12%	17%	18%	11%	24%	13%	15%	21%	13%	16%	13%	11%	18%	16%

Base: All respondents (n=1,000)

**Good decisions  
require good data.**

**Good data drives success.**

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