**Press release 19th November from the Irish environmental organisation, VOICE**

**‘New Deposit Return Scheme regulations welcomed by Irish Environmental organisation, VOICE, as important move to reduce plastics, aluminium and litter waste.’**

* **Deposit Refund Scheme incentivises customers to return plastic and aluminium containers**
* **International evidence shows that within two years, Deposit Refund Schemes can collect over 90% of materials for recycling**
* **In 2019, more than 13,000 tonnes of aluminium packaging and nearly 39,000 tonnes of recyclable plastic were sent for incineration**

The publication of new regulations introducing a Deposit Return Scheme for plastic bottles and aluminium cans was welcomed today by the Irish environmental organisation, VOICE. The Deposit Return Scheme will mean that customers will receive money back on plastic bottles and aluminium cans they return to retailers. The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications published the regulations today, after they were signed into law by Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD.

“We welcome the introduction of the Government’s Deposit Refund Scheme legislation as a step towards the promotion of the wise use of natural resources and the creation of a robust collection and recycling system for valuable materials, like plastic and aluminium. But the new DRS system needs to be well-managed with safeguards activated if targets are not met. We are planning a strong national awareness and information campaign to help people prepare for the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme next year, and we will continue to work with all the stakeholders, including the government, drinks industry and retailers, to make this a reality”, says Mindy O’Brien, Spokesperson for the ‘Return for Change’ campaign and Chief Executive of VOICE who has been campaigning for these regulations for over 20 years.

VOICE launched the ‘Return for Change’ campaign earlier this year urging the introduction of a strong Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS). This would see a deposit placed on certain containers (PET plastic bottles and aluminium cans, initially) at point of sale, which the customers would redeem when the empty container is returned to the retailer to be recycled. Many retailers will be using a ‘Reverse Vending Machine’, which customers can use themselves by putting in the bottles and cans into the machine to redeeming their deposit.  DRS’s are widely used internationally and have been proven to reduce litter and increase the recycling of these valuable resources.

The EU Single-Use Plastics Directive has set a legal target to collect 90% of plastic bottles by 2030 and the introduction of a DRS system was included in Programme for Government to help to achieve this target.

“We have to radically revolutionise how we collect and recycle valuable material and a Deposit Refund Scheme would, quite rightly, extend responsibility to the producer as well as the consumer.”, says Mindy O’Brien, “Since we launched the campaign earlier this year, we have had great support from the public, retailers, producers, public representatives and local authorities.”

You can find out more information about the webinar and the Deposit Return Scheme on the ‘Return for Change’ website at [www.returnforchange.org](http://www.returnforchange.org/) or on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

 For more information contact: [colin@returnforchange.org](mailto:colin@returnforchange.org)   or phone: +353 87 9230704

**Notes for the Editor**

**What is a Deposit Return Scheme?**

A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) incentivises people to return their empty containers to a return point to reclaim the deposit they paid when they purchased that item initially. Essentially, a DRS monetises the ‘waste’ covered by the Scheme.

**‘Return For Change’**

This campaign has been developed to get the word out about our upcoming Deposit Return Scheme so that people know why we need it, how to use it and how it works for them and the country. [www.returnforchange.org](http://www.returnforchange.org/)

**VOICE**

VOICE is the leading environmental charity advocating for effective waste and circular economy policy in Ireland and on an EU level. VOICE also works closely with communities and individuals on public engagement and education to effect behaviour change around waste generation. [www.voiceireland.org](http://www.voiceireland.org/)