



SB0642 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Testimony before the Maryland Senate Committee for Education, Energy and the Environment

March 5, 2024

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Ms. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Michael Loll, and I represent the Green Team of St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church in Columbia, MD. Our group's mission is to care for God's creation as instructed by Catholic social teaching. To that end, we advocate for legislation that protects Maryland's environment and its citizens, particularly those who live in underserved and vulnerable communities. We provide written testimony today in **strong support of SB0642**.

According to the Maryland Sierra Club, 5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year. Only 25% of these are recycled, with the rest ending up in roadside litter, landfills, and incinerators. Container deposit bills in other states have reduced the burden of unrecycled cans and bottles on the environment (<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/Sierra-Club-Beverage-Container-Guidance.pdf>). SB0642 would:

- Reduce roadside littering and pollution in our waterways.
- Increase can and bottle recycling, which would provide container manufacturers with stock materials which now have to be imported or made from scratch. Besides reducing manufacturing costs, reuse of materials translates to less pollution and green house gas emissions.
- Create new jobs in recycling and local container collection.
- Decrease toxic emissions from incinerators burning plastic bottles. Incinerators are typically located in low income and minority communities, which must bear the health burdens of this pollution.
- Reduce the cost of recycling for local governments. Since the bill is self funding, taxpayer responsibility for container recycling would be cut back or eliminated.
- Lower recycling costs for restaurants.

This bill has the support of local governments, glass bottle and aluminum can manufacturers, environmental organizations, and various faith groups. Our church emphasizes creation care and looking out for the common good, and this bill meets both of those stipulations.

Thank you for your time and attention.

We encourage a favorable report.

Michael Loll

Columbia, MD