

Written Testimony in Support of SB642 – Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

March 5, 2024

To: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB642, the Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

As a community volunteer actively engaged in efforts to reduce waste, I am greatly saddened by the amount of litter -- so much of being beverage containers -- that I see constantly on my walks in public areas and near waterways. I am aware of the many negative environmental impacts that all this waste causes.

This bill would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, depending on container size. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. The program would rely on reverse vending machines and other new technologies for convenient container redemption. Similar programs in other states have a proven record of success.

Therefore, I strongly support this legislation because of the following significant benefits it will offer for Maryland:

- Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution, and an increase in water quality, due to the dramatic increase in Maryland's beverage container recycling rate it will provide. The recycling rate currently is only 23% of containers sold in the state. States with a 10-cent deposit have achieved container recycling rates of 90%.
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would reduce CO² emissions by a substantial amount.
- Savings for taxpayers and local governments. Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection and processing of the beverage containers currently being disposed or littered, as well as the collection and processing of some containers currently recycled curbside. The program will divert materials from costly landfills and incinerators. These disposal costs are currently borne by taxpayers and local governments.
- Job creation. Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration.

This legislation offers an excellent pathway to reduce waste in Maryland and support worthy environmental goals.

Please give a favorable report on SB642. Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

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