



March 4, 2024

RE: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (HB735 and SB642)

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

The Surfrider Foundation's Ocean City and Annapolis Chapters, and our Annapolis High School Club support the *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program* ([HB735](#) and [SB642](#)), commonly known as the "bottle bill".

About 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, but only 23% of them are recycled. The rest are either incinerated, landfilled, or littered. No surprise that beverage containers are the second most collected item (behind only cigarette butts) at Surfrider's beach clean ups in the State.

Littered plastic bottles add to the plastic pollution crisis; plastic particles have been found in drinking water, food, human bodies, and in practically every inch of the globe. This pollution poses significant health risks to humans, especially those in underserved communities where the majority of plastic manufacturing and waste management infrastructure is located.

Bottle bills are a proven way to drastically increase the rate of recycling for beverage containers, while reducing the need to manufacture virgin bottles and lessening the

amount incinerated or landfilled. Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent bottle deposit.

How it works: Customers pay a small deposit when they purchase beverage containers, which is then refunded to them when they return the container to a retailer or redemption facility. The program is self-financing, saving costs to taxpayers and local governments. A share of the unclaimed deposits will fund development of refill/reuse bottle systems.

Bottle bills are proven policies to reduce litter and pollution, increase recycling rates, and increase the use of recycled materials--please cosponsor and support the *Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program Program* (HB735 and SB642), commonly known as the “bottle bill”.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Marina Feeser, Chair

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