



ANACOSTIA RIVERKEEPER®

March 6th, 2024

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Testimony to the Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee on SB 642,

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Favorable

Anacostia Riverkeeper wholeheartedly supports SB 642.

Over half a million Marylanders live in the Anacostia River's watershed in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, nearly 10% of the state's population. Combined with the Marylanders living in the Baltimore Harbor watershed, nearly a quarter of the state's population lives in a jurisdiction with an EPA required pollution diet for trash. In fact, Maryland has the dubious distinction of being home to two of only three bodies of water in the entire United States with a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Trash.

Of all the trash Anacostia Riverkeeper captures and documents from trash traps in the watershed, including Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, roughly 60% by weight is solely plastic bottles. For reference, we and our partners in both counties empty the contents of almost all the bottles captured, so this is a rigorous and conservative accounting of trash by weight. In land-based cleanups where glass bottles are more easily captured but can dominate the weight data vs plastic bottles, beverage containers including aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and glass bottles make up over 50% of the weight of all litter picked up by thousands of volunteers annually in our watershed.

This problem is unnecessary – ten states already have some version of a beverage container return and refund law on the books. These states see much higher actual waste diversion and recycling rates than we currently enjoy in Maryland, and much less harmful plastic and other beverage container pollution ruining the recreational value of their wild areas, choking and poisoning their wildlife, and filling their residents with an ever increasing number of microplastics. Please support SB 642, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

Trey Sherard, Anacostia Riverkeeper