



**MARYLAND STATE  
LICENSED BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION**

150 E Main Street, Suite 104, Westminster, MD 21157

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Members, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
The Honorable Benjamin Brooks

FROM: J. Steven Wise  
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DATE: March 5, 2024

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 642 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

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The Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association (MSLBA), which consists of approximately 800 Maryland businesses holding alcoholic beverage licenses (restaurants, bars, taverns, and package stores), **opposes** Senate Bill 642.

This legislation would require retailers, such as package stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business, either by establishing a “dedicated area” to store the returned containers or acquiring a reverse vending machine. In addition, they must pay the person redeeming the container in cash in some cases.

The package stores owned by our members are typically 3,000 to 5,000 square feet in size. The majority of this square footage is dedicated to shelving, sales and consumer transactions, coolers, walk-in boxes, and storage area for product that has yet to be put on the shelf. Senate Bill 642 would require each retailer to set aside either dedicated storage space or an area for a reverse vending machine. These stores are simply not equipped to accommodate storage of redeemable containers, and the space needed to do so would be substantial, considering that a retailer must accept any containers that are brought in, unless they are rejected due to their condition.

Furthermore, Chapter 465 of 2023 requires that the Maryland Department of the Environment conduct a recycling needs assessment before July of 2024. It would seem prudent to allow that study to be completed before the General Assembly enacts legislation implementing a beverage container recycling plan.

For these reasons, MSLBA respectfully requests that the Committee give this legislation an unfavorable report.