

March 5, 2023

Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

The Waterfront Partnership submits this testimony in favor of SB 642 – The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

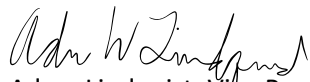
Representing major businesses and developers along the Baltimore Waterfront, we are a Business Improvement District responsible for maintaining, improving, and promoting Baltimore's Inner Harbor. In 2010 we set a goal, in partnership with Baltimore City, to have a swimmable and fishable Baltimore Harbor. To that end, we have supported many restoration efforts including creating Mr. Trash Wheel, supporting the statewide foam container ban, and supporting efforts to reduce plastic bag litter in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We do this because it is good for the environment but also because it is good for business.

The businesses that make up Waterfront Partnership pay to add amenities to the waterfront, beautify the landscaping, and keep it clean. The less litter there is on the land and in the water, the more money we have to spend on events like Fleet Week and amenities the new skate park at Rash Field. Our current cleaning budget is \$1.5 million per year, but that money would be better spent on events, landscaping, and attractions that bring people to the Inner Harbor. This bill would simultaneously free up resources for promoting and beautifying the Inner Harbor while also making our waterfront more attractive to locals and tourists.

The Inner Harbor sits at the end of the Jones Falls stream, which drains 64 square miles of land in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. When it rains, a tremendous amount of litter comes down the Jones Falls and covers the Harbor. Over the past 10 years, Mr. Trash Wheel and the trash wheel family have been the last line of defense to prevent our Harbor from being covered with litter collecting over 1.8 million plastic bottles. That may sound like a lot, but this is only 0.05% of the beverage containers produced in Maryland every year that end up as trash or litter.

Capturing plastic bottles in our waterways is not a solution, it is an urgent problem, and we need this Bottle Bill to create a real solution to reduce beverage container litter.

We respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB 735. Thank you for your time.



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Maryland Residents Support the Maryland Bottle Bill!

We, the undersigned Maryland Residents are writing to express our strong support of the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (HB 735, SB 642), also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

We strongly believe that adopting this legislation will reduce the amount of litter ending up in our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. Since 2014, Mr. Trash Wheel has collected 1.8 million plastic bottles from the Baltimore Harbor. It's time to put him on a diet!

The Maryland Bottle Bill will introduce a deposit-return system for beverage containers, including plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and glass bottles. This system has been proven effective in other states at reducing litter, promoting recycling, and conserving resources. By placing a monetary deposit on beverage containers, consumers are incentivized to return them for recycling, thereby reducing waste in our streets, parks, and waterways.

Not only does the Maryland Bottle Bill have environmental benefits, but it also has economic advantages. Implementing a deposit-return system would create jobs in recycling and waste management industries, stimulate local economies, and reduce costs associated with litter cleanup and landfill disposal.

Furthermore, this legislation aligns with Maryland's commitment to environmental stewardship and

Chesapeake Bay restoration. By supporting the Maryland Bottle Bill, the State would demonstrate its dedication to preserving natural resources, reducing pollution, and combating climate change.

We urge you to carefully consider the benefits of the Maryland Bottle Bill and to take decisive action to support its implementation. Let work together to create a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future for our State and for generations to come. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to seeing Maryland continue to lead the nation in environmental innovation and waste reduction.

Signed,

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