

# **HB0841\_Water\_Bottle\_Filling\_Stations\_and\_Reporting**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0841**  
**Environment - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction**  
**Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Ruth

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation, Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0841 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports a bill that requires a water bottle filling station be installed in new construction. In Maryland, water bottles are overwhelmingly treated as throwaways. It is estimated that only 3% of our plastic bottles are recycled. The other 97% of plastic bottles end up in landfills, incinerators or dumped into the environment. There are numerous negative effects of plastic water bottles, from energy use to harboring harmful chemicals such as PFAS and BPAs.

Many plastic water bottle users would prefer an alternative however, many buildings don't provide any. Therefore, using your own bottle may not be dependable or a convenient solution. This bill would not only make new buildings install water fillers, but it would also help set the expectation that all buildings have this convenient and reliable source of water.

Furthermore, this bill requires Maryland to research and discover alternative solutions to our plastic water bottle usage issue and publish the findings, thus not only raising awareness, but actively providing solutions.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **HB 841\_Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dave Arndt

Position: FAV

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**Testimony on:** HB0841 - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting  
**Submitting:** Dave Arndt  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** March 25, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0841. My name is Dave Arndt, a resident of Baltimore MD, a Climate, Environmental and Social Justice advocate, a chemical engineer, a former Product and Marketing Director for BP Solar in Frederick MD, a retiree of The National Institutes of Health. I urge you to vote favorably on HB0841.

The bill would require that a water bottle filling station be installed in new construction for which a drinking fountain is required under the current version of the international plumbing code or state or local law or regulation. Also, require the Department of the Environment to gather data and identify alternative methods for providing drinking water.

In Maryland it is estimated that only 3% of all plastic bottles are recycled. They are treated as throwaways. The other 97% of plastic bottles end up in our landfills, incinerators or dumped into the environment. I could go on and on about the negative effect of plastic water bottles, from energy use to harboring harmful chemical such as PFAS and BPAs.

Many plastic water bottle users would prefer an alternative however, many buildings don't provide any, therefore using your own bottle may not be dependable or a convenient solution.

This bill would make not only make new buildings install water fillers, it would help set the expectation that all buildings have this convenient and reliable source of water.

Furthermore, this bill requires the MDE to research and discover alternative solution to our plastic water bottle usage issue and publish the findings, thus not only raising awareness, but actively providing solutions.

We recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee for HB0841.

# **Arundel Rivers Testimony crossover FAV HB841 water**

Uploaded by: Elle Bassett

Position: FAV



PO Box 760 Edgewater, MD  
21037

410-224-3802  
[www.arundelrivers.org](http://www.arundelrivers.org)

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## Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 841 – Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction – Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
March 26, 2024

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB841**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

House Bill 841 will require a combined water bottle filling station and drinking fountain to be installed in all new construction for which a drinking fountain is required. This will modernize Maryland in the effort to reduce plastic waste and improve public health. This effort is not the first of its kind as similar legislation has been introduced or is already implemented in Arkansas, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island, and West Virginia. This bill will encourage more people to use reusable water bottles instead of adding plastic to landfills.

This is a necessary step in bringing our state closer to addressing the growing plastic waste problem. According to the EPA, plastics are a rapidly growing segment of municipal solid waste. Particularly, plastic containers and packaging accounted for over 14.5 million tons in 2018. Unfortunately, the Association of Plastic Recyclers measured that only about 8.7% of plastic is being recycled.<sup>1</sup>

Arundel Rivers frequently hosts volunteer clean-up efforts around our local waterways and communities, and we are supportive of any effort that will result in less plastic and microplastic from entering our local environment.

HB841 is a critical step towards a more sustainable, cleaner, and healthier future for Maryland and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT on HB168**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett  
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper  
Arundel Rivers Federation

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<sup>1</sup> Environmental Protection Agency. Plastics: Material – Specific Data. <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/plastics-material-specific-data>

# **Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAV\_HB841 SENATE CROS**

Uploaded by: Jenny Kraska

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE**

**March 26, 2024**

**HB 841**

**Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction – Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony as in support of House Bill 841. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 841 is focused on reducing plastic bottle waste and promoting access to clean, sustainable drinking water through the installation of water bottle filling stations.

In his encyclical letter "Laudato Si'," Pope Francis reminds us of our sacred duty to safeguard the Earth, our common home, and to preserve its beauty and resources for present and future generations. Plastic pollution poses a significant threat to the integrity of creation, contaminating our oceans, rivers, and landscapes, and endangering the health of wildlife and ecosystems. As custodians of God's creation, we are called to take decisive action to address this ecological crisis and restore harmony to the natural world.

Plastic bottled water consumption continues to contribute to environmental degradation and exacerbate the global water crisis. By installing water bottle filling stations in certain new construction, we can promote the use of reusable containers, reduce the demand for single-use plastic bottles, and ensure equitable access to clean water for all people.

Requiring the Department of the Environment to conduct surveys, gather data, and identify methods for plastic bottle waste reduction represents a proactive and responsible approach to addressing the root causes of plastic pollution. By investing in research, education, and outreach initiatives, we can raise awareness about the environmental and health impacts of plastic waste, promote sustainable alternatives, and empower individuals and communities to make informed choices that protect our planet and its inhabitants.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 841.





# **HB 841\_Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bott**

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Education, Energy and the Environment  
**Testimony on:** HB0841 - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting  
**Organization:** Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing  
**Submitting:** Dave Arndt, Co-Chair  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** March 26, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0841. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB0841.

The bill would require that a water bottle filling station be installed in new construction for which a drinking water fountain is required under the current version of the international plumbing code or state or local law or regulation. It also would require the Department of the Environment (MDE) to gather data and identify alternative methods for providing drinking water. Furthermore, this bill requires the MDE to research and discover alternative solutions to our plastic water bottle usage issue and publish the findings, thus not only raising awareness, but actively providing solutions.

In Maryland, it is estimated that only 3% of all plastic bottles are recycled. They are treated as throwaways. The other 97% of plastic bottles end up in our landfills, incinerators or dumped into the environment. There are numerous other negative effects of plastic water bottles, from energy use in manufacturing to being a source of harmful chemicals such as PFAS and BPAs.

Many plastic water bottle users would prefer an alternative; however, many buildings don't provide any. Therefore, using your own water bottle may not be dependable or a convenient solution. This bill would make not only new buildings install water fillers, it would help set the expectation that all buildings should have this convenient and reliable source of water.

We recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee for HB0841.

350MoCo  
Adat Shalom Climate Action  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry  
Chesapeake Earth Holders  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Climate Parents of Prince George's  
Climate Reality Project

ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition  
Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists  
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County  
Echotopia  
Elders Climate Action  
Fix Maryland Rail  
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization  
Greenbelt Climate Action Network  
HoCoClimateAction  
IndivisibleHoCoMD  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
Mobilize Frederick  
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
Mountain Maryland Movement  
Nuclear Information & Resource Service  
Progressive Maryland  
Safe & Healthy Playing Fields  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
WISE

**HB0841\_BottleFillingStations\_EEE\_LPP.org\_FAV .pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV



**[HB841](#)** – Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction – Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting  
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Hearing Date: March 26, 2024**

**Bill Sponsor: Delegates** Ruth, Allen, Charkoudian, Fair, Guyton, Healey, Kaiser, Lehman, J. Long, Stewart, and Terrasa

**Submitting Organization: Less Plastic Please** by Liz Feighner

**Position: Favorable**

[Less Plastic Please](#) is a Howard County based grassroots organization representing more than 200 subscribers. We are also a partner of the [Zero Waste Team](#) of [Howard County Sierra Club](#) and a [Beyond Plastics](#) Affiliate. We are urging **your support of HB0841**, which requires water bottle filling stations to be installed in all new construction for which a drinking fountain is required beginning October 2024, and requires a survey of water bottle purchases by state agencies in 2024 and alternatives for providing drinking water.

Reducing the production of plastics and creating a zero-waste economy is one of our top concerns. Less Plastic Please spearheaded campaigns with several organizations in Howard County to advocate for reducing single-use plastics through two successful bills, [Plastic Bag Fee](#) and [Plastic Reduction Law](#). We also hosted a [webinar on the Story of Plastics in 2020](#). As we highlighted during the discussion, plastic pollution is an environmental justice and public health crisis: Fracking, plastics production, litter, and disposal in landfills and by incineration harm communities of color disproportionately. We believe that social justice, racial justice and environmental justice are all part of a single, globally connected Movement for Justice.

Water bottle filling stations along with water fountains make it much easier for citizens to reduce the amount of single use plastic beverage containers being used by providing easy drink access without having to purchase a beverage in a single use container. This bill provides a healthy and less expensive choice for citizens that they wouldn't as easily have without the bill.

This bill identifies the quantity of plastic water bottles purchased in a year by state agencies, and looks at alternatives to buying these bottles. Plastic water bottles are a large portion of the plastic beverage containers sold in Maryland, and in 2019, fewer than a quarter of all plastic beverage containers were actually recycled and made into new products, despite what the vast majority of consumers want or believe is happening when they drop their plastic into recycling bins. The rest is incinerated or transferred to landfills, or ends up as litter on the side of the road.

We urge a favorable report for HB0841.

Submitted for [Less Plastic Please](#)

by Liz Feighner

[LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com](mailto:LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com)

**HB841-MDSierraClub\_fav26Mar2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV



Maryland Chapter  
P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**Testimony on:** HB 841, Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction – Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting  
**Position:** Support  
**Hearing Date:** March 26, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 841, a bill that would require, in certain new construction, installation of bottle refill stations where water fountains are already required by plumbing codes or local law or regulations. In addition, it requires that the Maryland Department of the Environment conduct a survey of all state agencies and state institutions of higher learning to determine the quantity and volume of plastic water bottles purchased during the 2024 calendar year and to identify alternative methods of providing drinking water.

Single-use plastic water bottles are made from fossil fuels; greenhouse gases are emitted at every stage of their life cycle, from extraction of natural gas, through plastic production, and disposal. They are also frequently littered: Plastic bottles are the third most frequently littered plastic in beach cleanups<sup>1</sup> and constitute about half of the trash by volume collected in trash traps on the Anacostia River.<sup>2</sup> Littered water bottles that wash into our waterways eventually break into ever smaller pieces of plastic, ingested by marine life, with fatal results. We are learning now that microplastics fill the air we breathe and the water we drink. Scientists have found that human beings may be ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic *a week*<sup>3</sup>.

In addressing the plastic pollution crisis, it makes sense to start with single-use plastic water bottles for which there are excellent alternatives – drinking fountains and water bottle refill stations – and to promote those alternatives in new construction. The bill goes further by setting the stage for reduction of single-use water bottles among State agencies and institutions of higher learning, based on collection of baseline data collected during calendar year 2024. It will help to quantify and ultimately reduce use of single-use plastic water bottles by State agencies.

We respectfully request a favorable report on HB 841.

Martha Ainsworth, Chair  
Chapter Zero Waste Team  
[Martha.Ainsworth@mdsierra.org](mailto:Martha.Ainsworth@mdsierra.org)

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
[Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org](mailto:Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org)

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<sup>1</sup> 5 Gyres Institute. 2018. "Better Alternatives Now, B.A.N. List 2.0."  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6537fd1a80e60f606d49aaff/t/65a8262a6c72c83098032233/1705518639220/BAN+List+2.0.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Anacostia Watershed Society.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlberg and University of Newcastle, Australia. 2019. *No Plastic in Nature: Assessing Plastic Ingestion from Nature to People*. Commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund.  
[https://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/plastic\\_ingestion\\_press\\_singles.pdf](https://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/plastic_ingestion_press_singles.pdf)

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.



# **Testimony in support of crossover bill HB0841.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

3/26/2024

Richard Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#0841 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Environment - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of CROSSOVER BILL HB0841, Environment - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

Maryland has an ambitious program to reduce waste and pollution. This bill is one component of that strategy dealing specifically with reduction in plastic waste from water in bottles. It implements a program to create water refilling stations to permit reuse of containers instead of discarding them into the environment.

According to a report from the World Economic Forum discussing a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) “We Can Cut Plastic Pollution by 80% by 2040 – here’s how” reduction of plastic bottle usage is a component of achieving that goal.<sup>1</sup>

NPR reported “The plastic problem isn't your fault, but you can be part of the solution.”<sup>2</sup> This forward looking bill says that Maryland is listening and will become a model on adopting solutions to achieve our environmental goals.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on CROSSOVER BILL HB#0841.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/06/reduce-plastic-pollution-unesp/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/12/1015296355/zero-waste-single-use-plastic-trash-recycle>

**HB841\_Ruth\_FAV\_Senate\_Testimony.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: S Ruth

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB841  
ENVIRONMENT - PLASTIC BOTTLE WASTE REDUCTION - WATER BOTTLE FILLING  
STATIONS AND REPORTING

Delegate Sheila Ruth  
March 26, 2024  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

HB841 takes two common sense steps towards reducing our consumption of single-use plastic water bottles:

1. It requires the installation of a water bottle refill station in all newly constructed buildings (not already under contract) where a water fountain is already required by the plumbing code. The refill station must accommodate a 10 inch container and may be integrated into the water fountain. Ensuring widespread availability of fresh water is an important and necessary step to reducing unnecessary use of single-use water bottles.

This is similar to 2023's bills in Illinois ([SB1715](#)) and Washington state (Section 2 of [HB1085](#)), both of which have been enacted into law.

2. Requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to survey the quantity and volume of water bottles purchased by state government units and higher educational institutions during 2024 and identify alternative methods of providing drinking water. MDE must report this to the General Assembly and the Governor and post the report on its website for public viewing. Our state government should set an example by taking the lead in reducing our unnecessary consumption of single-use plastic, and knowing how much is already being used is an important first step. MDE has already approved this language and said that they can do the survey.

## Why is this legislation important?

Recent research has increasingly shown how plastic has become a serious public health crisis that we must urgently address. [An analysis in March 2023](#) highlighted how plastics cause “[significant harm to human health, the environment and the economy](#)” from extraction to disposal. Plastics are also major contributors to climate change, emitting greenhouse gasses at every stage of their lifecycle.

Workers extracting the raw materials and producing plastics face a particular health risk, as do residents of environmental justice communities where plastic production and/or disposal facilities are located, such as the incinerator in Baltimore. However, virtually everyone is exposed to the health risks of plastic regularly. For example, some chemicals in plastic packaging, including Nonintentionally Added Substances (NIAS), can leach into our food that we eat and feed our families.

Over 98% of plastics are produced from oil, gas, and coal. Extraction of these fossil fuels and their use in the production of plastic releases greenhouse gasses and contributes to air and water pollution. In addition, thousands of different chemicals are used in the production of plastics to give them various desired characteristics, and some of those chemicals include carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, and neurotoxicants.

The disposal of plastics presents a huge challenge and health hazard as well. Plastics break down into micro- and nanoplastics. These tiny particles now permeate everything, including [Mount Everest](#), the [oceans](#), the air, [human blood](#), our lungs and [placentas](#), and may even [cross the blood-brain barrier](#). Recently, boats racing in the Ocean Race were equipped with special filters to sample the water - and [every single sample from every ocean environment, even the most remote, contained microplastics](#).

We eat and [breathe](#) microplastics all the time without knowing it, yet not enough is known about how these omnipresent particles impact our bodies. [Much more research is needed to understand the extent to which microplastics impact human health](#). However, laboratory research has shown that, in addition to being vectors for other toxic chemicals and pathogens, micro- and nanoplastics can be toxic on their own depending on the size, shape, and chemical composition of the particles.

## But what about recycling?

Increasing the percentage of plastic that is recycled is important, but even that is an inadequate solution. There is an environmental cost to recycling processes, too, and some methods of recycling emit toxic chemicals. A recent study found that [recycled plastic actually has more chemicals than virgin plastic](#). Many of these chemicals find their way into our food, making recycled plastics “[vectors for spreading chemicals of concern](#).”

Another recent study found that the [recycling process generates a significant amount of microplastics](#): as much as 6% to 13% of incoming waste

Alternate methods of recycling are being developed but have not yet been proven on a large scale and many also have negative environmental impacts.

Just this month, the Center for Climate Integrity released a [bombshell report](#) showing that [plastic producers have known for decades that recycling is not a viable solution](#), yet they continue to promote the convenience and disposability of single-use plastics.

## **How will HB841 help?**

Plastics have revolutionized many industries and undeniably serve important uses. However, it's clear that we cannot keep accelerating our consumption of single-use plastics without causing significant negative impacts on the environment and human health. For decades, the goal has been to "reduce, reuse, recycle" - but while recycling is important, we place too much emphasis on it and need to shift our efforts towards reducing unnecessary consumption of plastics in the first place.

The Maryland General Assembly has rightly been working on increasing and improving our recycling of all materials, including plastic bottles, and that important work must continue. However, we must also in parallel reduce the amount of disposable plastics we consume as a longer-term solution. HB841 takes some simple but important steps to begin that process, and I ask for a favorable report.

# **Trash Free MD Coalition Fav HB841 Environment - PI**

Uploaded by: shari wilson

Position: FAV



**Maryland PIRG**



## **HB 841 Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

**Date:** March 25, 2024

**Position:** Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

We enthusiastically support the goal of reducing plastic waste and encouraging use of reusable water bottles. According to the OECD, global **production of plastic is projected to triple by 2060**. One of the key drivers of the increase is packaging including single use plastic bottles.

Locally, in Maryland, at the Baltimore Waterfront Partnership's 2023 annual count of trash in "one" dumpster, **5430 plastic bottles** were found. The Trash Wheels can collect 16 dumpsters worth of trash during a single rainstorm. We have all noted the proliferation of plastic trash and bottles along our roadways. We must do



better.

HB 841 increases opportunities for Marylanders to save money and use a reusable water bottle. As we have seen at airports and schools, these water refill stations work. People use them. Let's make this the norm. HB 841 gets this policy option underway efficiently – adding the stations with public drinking water fountains in new construction.

HB841 also requires the State to determine how many single use plastic water bottles it uses. This data will inform options for the State to reduce its own reliance on single use plastics.

We commend and thank Delegate Ruth and co-sponsors for initiating this common sense and effective proposal.

Contact: Shari Wilson ([shari@trashfreemaryland.org](mailto:shari@trashfreemaryland.org))

Alice Ferguson Foundation

Blue Water Baltimore

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Environmental Justice Ministry Team, Cedar Lane UU Congregation

Environment Maryland

Go Green OC Campaign

Little Falls Watershed Association

Maryland PIRG

Mr. Trash Wheel

National Aquarium

Plastic Free QAC

Trash Free Maryland

Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore

Associate, Zero Waste USA

# **HB841\_IndivisibleHoCoMD\_FAV\_CrystalKonnySenate.pdf**

Uploaded by: Crystal Konny

Position: FWA



**HB841 – Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction –  
Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

**Testimony before Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**March 26, 2024**

**Position: Favorable as Amended in the House**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in support of HB841, which requires water bottle filling stations to be installed in all new construction for which a drinking fountain is required beginning October 2024, and requires a survey of water bottle purchases by state agencies in 2024 and alternatives for providing drinking water. We appreciate the leadership of Del. Ruth and her colleagues for sponsoring this important legislation.

Water bottle filling stations along with water fountains make it much easier for citizens to drink water rather than having to buy drinks, whether the drinks be water or other types of beverages. This bill provides a healthy and less expensive choice for citizens that they wouldn't as easily have without the bill.

This bill identifies the quantity of plastic water bottles purchased in a year by state agencies, and looks at alternatives to buying these bottles. Plastic water bottles are a large portion of the plastic beverage containers sold in Maryland, and in 2019, fewer than a quarter of all plastic beverage containers were actually recycled and made into new products, despite what the vast majority of consumers want or believe is happening when they drop their plastic into recycling bins. The rest is incinerated or transferred to landfills, or ends up as litter on the side of the road.

Plastic is a huge problem for the environment on so many levels, from its production as a derivative of crude oil and natural gas, to litter, to not breaking down completely for many years. This bill will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and divert waste from landfills and incinerators. It will reduce demand for plastic. The members of Indivisible Howard County support such common-sense measures to reduce waste and clean up our environment.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We respectfully urge a favorable (as amended in the House) committee report.**

Crystal Konny  
11605 Dark Fire Way  
Columbia, MD 21044

# **Fav WAmend AHA HB 841 Water Bottle Filling Station**

Uploaded by: Laura Hale

Position: FWA



March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Testimony of Laura Hale  
American Heart Association

**Favorable W/Amendment HB 841 Environment - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

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

Thank you for your time and consideration. The American Heart Association extends its support with one amendment to HB 841 Environment - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

We strongly support increasing water bottle filling stations. Having these more readily available can incentive and increase drink of water rather than unhealthy alternatives. Making drinking water an easy part of your day makes a huge difference in long term healthy.

The Heart Association asks that in addition to new construction, that also major renovations are included in the requirement for water bottle filling station.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report with amendment on HB 841