

Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.

Submitted: 2/14/2025. Hearing Date: 2/18/2025.

In Support of SB0346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

My name is John McKusick and I reside in District 43. I retired from a career in student services at Towson University in 2017 after working for ten years at CCBC in addition to 20 years at Towson. I have been a volunteer for environmental causes for much of my adult life. This year I am part of the Climate & Environment advocacy team for Quaker Voice of Maryland and lead Quaker Voice advocacy to support the Maryland Bottle Bill.

As a regular volunteer with environmental organizations in Baltimore, like Blue Water Baltimore, I have worked on many stream cleanup projects where large quantities of plastic, metal, and glass are collected. It is a feel good job that delivers the satisfaction one anticipates from completing a useful community supporting activity. However, that good feeling doesn't last long as behaviors have not changed and the site quickly returns to a contaminated state.

This is why I love SB0346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. They are simple, straightforward, and easily understood in design and structure. The authors of the Maryland bill have established targets for improvement including a ninety percent redemption rate! To me, that means less plastic, metal, and glass I'm picking up in my neighborhood streams. How different many of our waterways will look and be as a result. And how much healthier these waterways will be.

Quaker Voice of Maryland, a small but growing advocacy group that is engaging Quakers and other people with similar interests across the state, is pleased to designate SB0232 as one of four pieces of environmental legislation for which we are advocating. We are committed to both pragmatic and spiritual approaches to "seeking a world renewed" and value community and dialogue as pathways to bringing people together to care for the earth. Quakers believe and try to embody the idea that there is that of God in each person. As a result, we are optimistic problem solvers. Collectively and working together, we can succeed and we must. A Maryland bottle bill would be a great way to care for our earth. We urge a favorable report for SB0346.

Sincerely,

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