

February 14, 2025

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

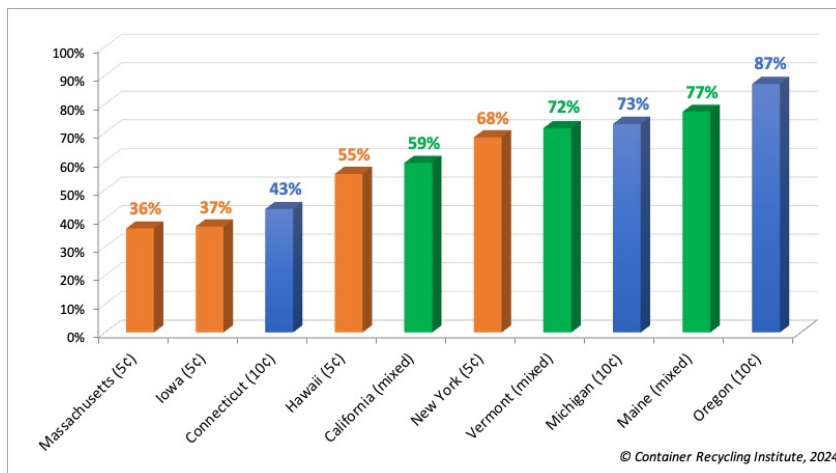
We are writing in support of Senate Bill 346, “Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program,” a bill that would establish a beverage container deposit program in Maryland.

We applaud the bill for:

1. Incorporating most beverage types into the proposed deposit-refund program (DRS), including **wine and liquor**. Doing so will generate clean, high-quality glass that is desired by glass manufacturers, and will help alleviate the pressure that the state has been experiencing to find aggregate uses for glass collected through municipal programs.
2. Including a **wide scope of beverage containers**, as per the definition.
3. Specifying a **deposit of 10¢ for containers less than or equal to 24 fluid ounces and 15¢ for containers more than 24 ounces**, with options to increase the refund value in the future.
4. Including **robust performance targets** as well as a description of the penalties for not completing these targets.

Ten cents is a strong financial incentive for people to return containers rather than throw them in the trash or litter them. Michigan and Oregon, the two U.S. states with dime deposits, have achieved much higher redemption rates—73% and 87% respectively in 2024—than the deposit states with 5¢ deposits (where reported redemption rates range from 38% to 72%). When consumers who purchased the drinks do not

10 Deposit States Redemption Rates with Deposit Amounts



take bottles and cans in for refunds themselves, there are always other people and groups ready to do the redemption for them to generate income.

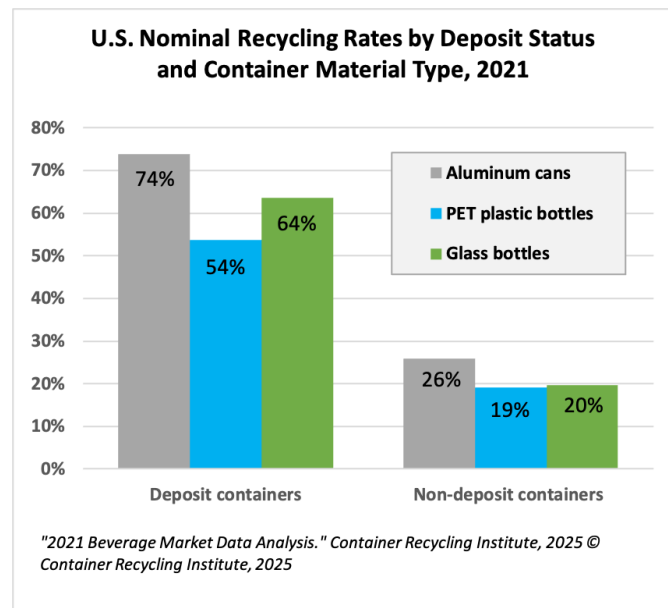
For more than 50 years, beverage container deposit refund laws have been successful in achieving recycling rates that are up to 3 times higher than those of bottles and cans without deposits. As the graphic below shows, about three quarters (74%) of aluminum cans with a deposit were recycled nationwide in 2021, in contrast to just 26% of cans lacking a deposit. The differences for bottles are more pronounced: 54% vs. 19% for non-deposit PET plastic, and 64% vs. 20% for non-deposit glass.

Increasing beverage sales nationwide has led to burgeoning bottle and can waste.

Based on national statistics, CRI estimates that 79% of the 5.5 billion beverage bottles and cans sold in Maryland in 2021 were wasted: littered, landfilled, or incinerated. That level of consumption and wasting represents a significant burden on taxpayers: whether through city-run recycling programs or municipally-contracted trash pick-up and disposal.

Deposits have multiple benefits, including:

- **Achieving higher recycling rates** than municipal programs alone.
- **Transferring** the financial and operational responsibility for recycling from taxpayers and ratepayers to the producers of disposable beverage containers.
- **Adding value to local and regional economies** through the sale and processing of scrap materials.
- **Avoiding greenhouse gas emissions and reducing energy use** by displacing virgin materials in manufacturing.
- **Reducing litter** that is expensive for public and private entities to clean up, that causes injuries to people and domestic animals, and that adds to harmful ocean plastic waste.
- **Promoting job growth**; it is estimated that there are more than 20,000 jobs resulting from the existing deposit return systems in the 10 states where the law exists.



Beverage container deposit programs are extremely popular – a recent public opinion poll by Gonzales Research and Media Services found that **90%** of Maryland voters would support a deposit return system in the state.

If Maryland were to pass this DRS bill, CRI estimates that the state would recycle **3.4 billion additional containers annually—or just over 210,000 tons of metal, glass, plastic and paper—**

over and above the recycling currently taking place. By reducing the need to make new bottles and cans from virgin materials, this additional recycling would eliminate about 239,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions: ***an amount equivalent to taking almost 52,000 cars off the road for a year.***

We are optimistic that there will be strong markets for deposit containers generated in Maryland, in part because multiple global beverage brands have made public announcements about increasing their use of recycled materials, as the below table shows.

Selected plastics reduction commitments by global brands		
Company	Timeframe	Commitment or target
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Equivalent of 100% of containers collected and recycled
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Average 50% recycled content in bottles
Danone	by 2025	100% of packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable
McDonald's	by 2025	100% of guest packaging from renewable, recycled or certified sources
Kraft Heinz	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable, reusable or compostable
Nestlé	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable or reusable
Reprinted from CRI's Winter 2018 newsletter		
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These lofty goals can only be met through the increased availability of high-quality beverage bottles and cans for use as feedstock in new containers. Deposit programs consistently generate such high-quality bottles and cans. For example, deposit-grade PET bottles have recently had a value of 21.13¢ per pound, ***twice the value of non-deposit, curbside PET*** (10.47¢ per pound).

Deposits on beverage containers are now available to more than 553 million people worldwide. With the announcement of multiple new deposit laws in 2023 and 2024 (including Poland, Singapore, England, Northern Ireland, and Spain), it is expected that more than **800 million people will have access to deposit programs by 2027**. This trend is projected to continue as more nations realize that deposits are a vital part of the solution to the problem of bottle and can waste and plastic pollution.

In sum, CRI supports the passage of a beverage container deposit law in Maryland. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Susan Collins
President, Container Recycling Institute

***About the Container Recycling Institute:** CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging.*