



February 14, 2025

**SB346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Hearing February 18, 2025
FAVORABLE**

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

The Green Towson Alliance writes in support of SB346 which creates a self-funding program placing a five cent deposit on aluminum, glass and plastic beverage containers which is refunded to consumers when containers are returned. This bill will increase recycling rates and greatly reduce the amount of beverage container litter in Maryland. Marylanders purchase more than 5.5 billion beverage containers each year and only about one quarter of those containers are recycled. That leaves more than four billion containers ending up in our waterways and on our land every year.

Each spring, the Green Towson Alliance partners with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore County to organize clean-ups of local streams to remove plastic litter and other trash. In 2024, clean-ups at just eleven sites produced 150 bags of trash with the most commonly found items being plastic bottles and other plastics. Due to plastic bag legislation in our area, we are finding much less plastic bag trash, but the volume of beverage containers and other plastics persists. This plastic trash, if not hand collected and removed by volunteers, breaks down into microplastics which are consumed by fish and other wildlife moving up the food chain to eventually reach us. One estimate states that humans are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic per week.

The small deposit that is added to the purchase of beverage containers and refundable upon return of the bottle will act as a much-needed incentive for consumers to return these containers for their deposit instead of littering the environment. This is not a new idea and the ten states that have long-standing bottle bills have seen major reductions in beverage container litter (up to 84%) and large increases in recycling rates. Michigan and Oregon have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a ten cent deposit. What a difference to our waterways if 90% of beverage containers were to be recycled!

We ask for a favorable report on SB346 as an important step toward the goal of a greener, healthier Maryland for all.

Respectfully,
Kirsten Hoffman for the Green Towson Alliance
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The Green Towson Alliance unites Towson area environmentalists to create a greener, healthier and more beautiful community through collaboration and activism.