



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0346**

**Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction  
Program**

**FAVORABLE**

**DATE: February 14, 2025**

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

**FROM:** Rev. Walter Tucker, Member, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 0346. The Episcopal Church along with many other faith communities endorses responsible stewardship of God's creation. Our faith teaches us that all creation is interconnected, and the health of our environment directly impacts the well-being of our communities. Our standard of living has led to a degradation of our sacred earth, and we have a moral responsibility to work for restoration of the environment.

About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland each year. Of those, only 1.5 billion containers are captured for recycling – even with Maryland's curbside pickup of recyclables. Of the 4 billion remaining containers, 2.6 billion are plastic, and end up in landfills, in our waterways and as litter. Plastic pollution is a major problem worldwide. Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used containers and keeping them out of our environment. 10 U.S. states have successful beverage container deposit programs.

All creation is a gift from God that we need to nurture. This bill promotes environmental stewardship and care for our environment, our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. It aligns with our faith's teachings on the importance of caring for God's creation and ensuring that future generations can enjoy a healthy and sustainable environment.

**The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.**