



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 232 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

TO: Chair Feldman and the members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
FROM: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate on Climate Change
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
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The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **SB 346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**. We are a faith-based advocacy organization based on Unitarian Universalist (UU) Values, including Interdependence (honoring the interdependent web of all existence) and Justice (where all feel welcome and can thrive). Working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs. The **Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program** aligns with both of the values by reducing the amount of waste generated by un-recycled beverage containers, the amount of fossil fuels used in their production and the litter in our communities.

The Program would have the following benefits:

- **Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution, and an increase in water quality.** It would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles.
- **Quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate.** The estimated recycling rate, currently only 25% of containers sold in the state, would increase to more than 90% with the Bottle Bill.
- **Increase in high quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers.** The program would generate an additional 13,328 tons of aluminum, 47,665 tons of PET plastic, 7,847 tons of HDPE plastic, and 159,397 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers, annually.
- **Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.** By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 50,371 cars.
- **Savings for taxpayers and local governments.** Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection, processing, and recycling of beverage containers currently disposed, littered, and recycled, diverting materials from landfills and incinerators, saving costs for taxpayers and local governments.
- **Job creation.** Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times more jobs as landfills or incineration.

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd www.twitter.com/uulmmd

Establishing **Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program** would reduce litter, prevent plastic pollution, increase recycling, and conserve resources!

We urge a FAVORABLE report on **SB 346**.

Phil Webster, PhD

Lead Advocate, Climate Change UULM-MD

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