

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Testimony on:** SB 96, Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement  
**Position:** Support  
**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB 96, a bill that would require, in new construction, renovated buildings, and areas under renovation within existing buildings, installation of bottle refill stations where water fountains are already required by plumbing codes or local law or regulations. The greater availability of water bottle filling stations will facilitate the use of reusable water bottles and contribute to a reduction in the use of single-use plastic water bottles.

Single-use plastic water bottles are made from fossil fuels; greenhouse gases are emitted at every stage of their life cycle, from extraction of natural gas, through plastic production, and disposal. They are also frequently littered: Plastic bottles are the third most frequently littered plastic in beach cleanups<sup>1</sup> and constitute about half of the trash by volume collected in trash traps on the Anacostia River.<sup>2</sup> Littered water bottles that wash into our waterways eventually break into ever smaller pieces of plastic, ingested by marine life, with fatal results. We are learning now that microplastics fill the air we breathe and the water we drink. Scientists have found that human beings may be ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic *a week*<sup>3</sup>.

In addressing the plastic pollution crisis, it makes sense to start with single-use plastic water bottles for which there are excellent alternatives – drinking fountains and water bottle refill stations – and to promote those alternatives in new construction and renovations.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB 96.

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<sup>1</sup> 5 Gyres Institute. 2018. "Better Alternatives Now, B.A.N. List 2.0."  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6537fd1a80e60f606d49aaff/t/65a8262a6c72c83098032233/1705518639220/BAN+List+2.0.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Anacostia Watershed Society.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlberg and University of Newcastle, Australia. 2019. *No Plastic in Nature: Assessing Plastic Ingestion from Nature to People*. Commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund.  
[https://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/plastic\\_ingestion\\_press\\_singles.pdf](https://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/plastic_ingestion_press_singles.pdf)

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.