

## **SB96\_Brooks.pdf**

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

**BENJAMIN BROOKS**  
*Legislative District 10*  
Baltimore County

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Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee  
  
Energy Subcommittee

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Chair, Joint Electric Universal  
Service Program Workgroup



**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 96**  
**Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
February 11, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice-chair Kagan, members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB 96, Environment - Water Bottle Filling Stations – Requirement. The purpose of this bill is to increase access to clean drinking water for all Marylanders by requiring the installation of water bottle filling stations in certain new or renovated buildings. By promoting sustainability, reducing plastic waste, and ensuring easy access to water, this legislation offers a forward-thinking solution to two pressing issues: the need for accessible drinking water and the environmental impact of single-use plastic bottles.

Plastic waste, particularly from disposable water bottles, has become a major environmental concern, polluting our waterways and contributing to landfill overflow. At the same time, easy access to clean, potable water is essential for public health. Water bottle filling stations provide an effective, eco-friendly alternative by allowing individuals to refill their personal bottles, reducing the need for single-use plastic. However, such stations are not universally available, particularly in older buildings and in communities with fewer resources.

SB 96 will require the installation of water bottle filling stations in all new construction where a drinking fountain is mandated under the current International Plumbing Code, state law, or local regulations. The bill will also require the installation of these stations when existing drinking fountains are replaced during building renovations and that they are connected to the potable water distribution and sanitary drainage systems. The Maryland Department of Labor will be tasked with adopting regulations to ensure the proper implementation and enforcement of this critical legislation.

Maryland must lead the way on encouraging the use of refillable water containers and reducing our reliance on disposable plastic bottles. Additionally, water bottle filling stations are an affordable, simple way to provide a healthier option to sugary drinks in spaces like schools, offices, airports, and shopping centers. By enacting SB 96, Maryland will have the opportunity to modernize its public infrastructure, reduce plastic waste, and make clean drinking water more accessible to all.

For these reasons, I strongly urge a favorable report on SB 96.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the phrase "With kindest regards,".

Benjamin Brooks

# **SB0096\_Water\_Bottle\_Filling\_Stations\_MLC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## **TESTIMONY FOR SB0096**

### **Environment - Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Brooks

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0096 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports a bill that requires a water bottle filling station be installed in new construction. In Maryland, water bottles are overwhelmingly treated as throwaways. It is estimated that only 3% of our plastic bottles are recycled. The other 97% of plastic bottles end up in landfills, incinerators or dumped into the environment. There are numerous negative effects of plastic water bottles, from energy use to harboring harmful chemicals such as PFAS and BPAs.

Many plastic water bottle users would prefer an alternative however, many buildings don't provide any. Therefore, using your own bottle may not be dependable or a convenient solution. This bill would require the installation of water fillers in all water fountains in all new construction and it would also help get us to a place where we have an expectation that all buildings have this convenient and reliable source of water.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **MRN2025 SB96 Written.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chaz Miller

Position: FAV



**February 11, 2025**

**To: Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**  
**Re: SB 96 Water Bottle Filling Stations**  
**Support**

Maryland Recycling Network members are public and private sectors recyclers and recycling advocates. Our members are county and municipal government recycling managers, private sector recyclers, non-profit recyclers and citizens who support recycling. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

We promote sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's") of materials otherwise destined for disposal and the purchase of products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

We support SB 96 and thank Senator Brooks for introducing it

SB 96 is an outstanding example of waste reduction at work. Many of us use the water bottle filling stations at BWI. Every time we do we eliminate the use of a water bottle or can. While we can recycle those containers, why use them if we have a refillable option? After all, every time we choose to refill we conserve natural resources and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

SB 96 simply requires installing these water bottle filling stations in new building construction where water fountains are required and installing them when older buildings with water fountains are being renovated. This is a win for Maryland's environment.

We urge speedy passage of this bill.

About the Maryland Recycling Network

The Maryland Recycling Network is a resource for legislators and others interested in recycling and waste reduction. Contact us via email [phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org](mailto:phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org), phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding our comments.

Sincerely,

Chaz Miller  
Chair, MRN Legislative Committee

**Maryland Recycling Network**  
[www.marylandrecyclingnetwork.org](http://www.marylandrecyclingnetwork.org) \* (443) 741-8740

## **SB0096 Environment - Water Bottle Filling Stations**

Uploaded by: Chris Parts

Position: FAV





7 February 2025

The Honorable Senator Brian Feldman  
Chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support for SB 0096  
Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement

Dear Chairman Feldman and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

I am writing to voice AIA Maryland's support for Senate Bill 0096 – Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement. AIA Maryland represents over 2,000 architects in the state of Maryland and advocates for the profession and the quality of the built environment. We recognize that our building codes are developed as a consensus based process that enables jurisdictions to adopt and modify as they see fit. We see this bill as one small change that helps to drive Maryland toward our cleaner and more sustainable goals and may help to diminish the single stream plastics that often end up in our abundant waterways. In my practice, we work across housing, education and healthcare sectors and in almost all cases, the drinking fountains we specify do have a water bottle filling station, but it is not a requirement of the regulations.

Requiring water bottle filling stations at locations where drinking fountains are required is a simple change that can benefit us all. A typical water fountain now is a dual height fountain – two side by side at different heights to accommodate the diverse needs of someone who may be in a wheelchair or have health concerns that make the taller fountain difficult and a higher fountain for those who are standing. Adding the bottle filling station to the accessible fountain enables individuals to choose to avoid single stream plastics and it makes that filling station work for any individual.

Maryland would not be alone in implementing this regulation. In 2015, Washington added the requirement that at least one water bottle filling stations should be provided per floor of buildings that require drinking fountains. In 2026, legislation in Illinois goes into effect wherein water bottle filling stations shall be required in virtually all projects. International Code Council regulations have gradually been moving in this direction, but it is a slow process.

The cost to add a water bottle filling station is a one-time investment of negligible cost that significantly reduces the recurring costs and environmental impact of single-use plastics. According to the container recycling institute, 86% of disposable water bottles used in the United States become garbage or litter, adding volume to our landfills and adding about 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere annually to make those bottles. While filling stations will not eliminate the issue of single use plastic bottles, it will move our state toward a better future, requiring less to be made and collected.

We understand that there has been some concerns expressed about this legislation, indicating that building owners do not want to install the bottle filling stations where properties have sinks that can be used. Please do not be confused by this issue. When a drinking fountain is required by code, there is to be at least one hi-lo drinking fountain in a building to provide a spout for standing people and one for individuals in wheelchairs. When multiple drinking fountains are required, at least half of them are required to be accessible. In the plumbing code, a sink is not an approved alternate for a drinking fountain and a sink is not

necessarily accessible. Providing a bottle filling station in a location where a drinking fountain is required, would only have the minimal incremental cost of the filling station as a manufactured part of the drinking fountain/water filling station. A brief poll of our board revealed that no one could recall an instance where an owner rejected the change to include a bottle filling station as a part of the water fountain on a project.

We are pleased to support this bill and we ask for your to vote in favor of SB 0096.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. R.', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Parts, AIA  
Director, Past President, AIA Maryland

# **Senate side water bottle refilling bill.docx Feb 1**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Mizrahi

Position: FAV



## **Testimony in Support of SB0096: Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations – Requirement**

**February 11, 2025 1:00 PM**

**Maryland General Assembly – EEE**

**From: Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, co-founder, Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund**

**Commissioner, MD Commission on Climate Change\* (for identification only)**

### **Refill and Refresh**

*No plastic waste, no bottles tossed,  
A simple fix, a smaller cost.  
Clean, cool water—free to pour,  
For every school, for every door.*

*Less pollution, less to pay,  
A smarter, greener, better way.  
Maryland, now's the time to act,  
Pass this bill—set the pact!*

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the EEE Committee. My name is Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, and I strongly support SB00096: Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations – Requirement, which mandates the installation of water bottle filling stations in new construction and certain renovations across Maryland. This forward-thinking legislation is a critical step toward achieving our state's climate goals, enhancing public health, and ensuring a more sustainable and cost-effective future for Maryland.

### **Advancing Maryland's Climate Goals**

The Maryland Climate Solutions Now Act sets ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and HB 277 directly supports these objectives. By making it easier and more convenient to refill reusable water bottles, this legislation reduces reliance on single-use plastic bottles, which are significant contributors to plastic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Single-use plastics require energy-intensive production processes and often end up in landfills, incinerators, or waterways, where they release harmful emissions and toxins. Transitioning to accessible water bottle filling stations encourages Marylanders to embrace reusable alternatives, cutting waste and lowering the environmental footprint of our state.

### **Fiscal Benefits for Maryland's Budget**

SB00096 is not only an environmental imperative but also a sound fiscal investment. The

legislation promotes the use of potable tap water, which is far more affordable than bottled water, reducing costs for individuals and institutions. Moreover, fewer single-use bottles mean reduced waste management expenses for municipalities.

Additionally, by addressing the root causes of plastic pollution, this bill helps mitigate the long-term financial burden on our state's ecosystems and infrastructure. The economic impact of plastic waste cleanup, drainage blockages, and damage to local ecosystems far outweighs the modest costs of installing these stations.

### **Positioning Maryland as a Leader in Sustainability**

By passing SB00096, Maryland has an opportunity to position itself as a leader in sustainability and innovation. States across the country are adopting measures to combat plastic pollution, and Maryland can set a national example by integrating forward-thinking infrastructure into our building codes.

This legislation is a tangible way to show that Maryland is committed to protecting our environment and ensuring a healthy future for generations to come. It signals to residents, businesses, and visitors that we prioritize long-term sustainability and are willing to take actionable steps to achieve it.

### **Public Health and Equity Considerations**

Water bottle filling stations provide a hygienic, reliable source of clean drinking water, supporting public health and hydration. This is especially critical for schools, community centers, and public buildings, where access to clean water is a fundamental need.

Moreover, by requiring these stations in all new construction and major renovations, SB00096 ensures equitable access to water, regardless of socioeconomic status or location. This aligns with Maryland's commitment to equity and environmental justice, ensuring that every community benefits from this essential infrastructure.

### **Conclusion**

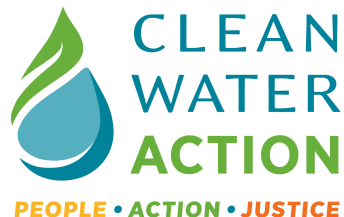
In conclusion, SB00096 represents a practical, impactful step toward achieving Maryland's climate goals, reducing waste, and enhancing public health while reinforcing our state's leadership in sustainability. I urge the committee to give this bill a favorable report and help Maryland continue its journey toward a cleaner, greener, and more forward-looking future.

Thank you for your consideration.

# **Sign-On SB96 Water Bottle Refill - Trash Free MD F**

Uploaded by: Kelly Doordan

Position: FAV



## SB96 Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations Requirement

**Date:** February 11, 2025

**Position:** Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

We enthusiastically support the goal of reducing plastic waste and making it easier for Marylanders to use reusable water bottles. According to the OECD, global **production of plastic is projected to triple by 2060**. One of the key drivers of the increase is packaging – including single use plastic bottles.

Only a small fraction of plastic is recycled, and the rest is disposed of or mismanaged. Locally, in Maryland, at the Baltimore Waterfront Partnership's 2024 fall count of trash in "one" dumpster, **1,973 plastic bottles** were found. The Trash Wheels can collect 16 dumpsters worth of trash during a single rainstorm. We have all noted the proliferation of plastic trash and bottles along our roadways. We must do better.

SB 96 increases opportunities for Marylanders to save money and use a reusable water bottle on the go. As we have seen at airports and schools, these water refill stations work. People use them. Let's make this the norm. SB 96 gets this policy option underway efficiently – adding the stations with public drinking water fountains in new construction or certain renovations.

Contact: Kelly Doordan ([kelly@trashfreemaryland.org](mailto:kelly@trashfreemaryland.org)), Executive Director, Trash Free Maryland

Trash Free Maryland

Blue Water Baltimore

National Aquarium

Clean Water Action

Little Falls Watershed Alliance

# **Fav AHA SB 96 Water Bottle Filling Stations.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Hale

Position: FAV





February 7, 2025

Testimony of Laura Hale  
American Heart Association

**Favorable SB 96 Environment - Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

Thank you for your time and consideration. The American Heart Association extends its strong support to SB 96 Environment - Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

We strongly support increasing water bottle filling stations. Having these more readily available can incentive and increase drink of water rather than unhealthy alternatives. Making drinking water an easy part of your day makes a huge difference in long term health. More than half of children in the United States do not drink enough water<sup>1</sup>.

We also applaud the inclusion of major reconstruction that touches the plumbing in addition to new construction. This will be helpful, especially for schools. Drinking water dispensers in schools can nearly triple how much water students drink at lunch time, according to one study. Drinking water can also positively impact children's cognitive performance, particularly their short-term memory<sup>2</sup>. Access to clean drinking water for students will make for a healthier generation of kids.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on SB 96.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Water & Nutrition. Updated October 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/nutrition/index.html>. Accessed October 31, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Masento NA, Golightly M, Field DT, Butler LT, van Reekum CM. Effects of hydration status on cognitive performance and mood. *Br J Nutr*. 2014; 111(10):1841-52, doi: 10.1017/S0007114513004455

# **SB096 Water Bottle Filling Stations\_EEE\_CJW FAV.pd**

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Education, Energy and the Environment  
**Testimony on:** SB0096 Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations – Requirement  
**Organization:** Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing  
**Submitting:** Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2025

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB096. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB096.

The bill requires that a water bottle filling station be installed in new construction where a drinking water fountain is required under the current version of the international plumbing code or state or local law or regulation, and in buildings undergoing renovation if drinking fountains will be replaced. Many plastic water bottle users would prefer an alternative; however, many buildings don't provide other options. Using your own water bottle may not be a dependable or convenient solution. This bill will solve this problem by installing water bottle fillers in new and renovated buildings.

In Maryland, it is estimated that only 3% of all plastic bottles are recycled. They are treated as throwaways. The other 97% of plastic bottles end up in our landfills, incinerators or dumped into the environment. There are numerous other negative effects of plastic water bottles, from energy use in manufacturing to being a source of harmful chemicals such as PFAS and BPAs.

Transitioning to accessible water bottle filling stations encourages Marylanders to embrace reusable alternatives, cutting waste and lowering the environmental footprint. SB096 also has positive economic benefits, not only for individuals who will spend less on bottled water, but also municipalities who will spend less on waste management.

In conclusion, SB096 represents a practical, impactful step toward achieving Maryland's climate goals, reducing waste, and enhancing public health while reinforcing our state's leadership in sustainability. I urge the committee to give this bill a favorable report and help Maryland continue its journey toward a cleaner, greener, and more forward-looking future.

We recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee for SB096.

350MoCo  
Adat Shalom Climate Action  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry  
Chesapeake Earth Holders  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Parents of Prince George's  
Climate Reality Project  
ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition  
Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists  
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County  
Echotopia  
Elders Climate Action  
Fix Maryland Rail  
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization  
Greenbelt Climate Action Network  
HoCoClimateAction  
IndivisibleHoCoMD  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund  
Mobilize Frederick  
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
Mountain Maryland Movement  
Nuclear Information & Resource Service  
Progressive Maryland  
Safe & Healthy Playing Fields  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
WISE

# **SB0096\_FAV\_BottleFillingStations\_ENT\_LPP.org .pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV



**[SB0096](#) – Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction – Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**  
**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**  
**Hearing Date: February 11, 2025**  
**Bill Sponsor: Senator Brooks**  
**Submitting Organization: Less Plastic Please by Liz Feighner**  
**Position: Favorable**

[Less Plastic Please](#) is a Howard County based grassroots organization representing more than 200 subscribers. We are a [Beyond Plastics](#) Affiliate. We are urging **your support of SB0096** which requires water bottle filling stations to be installed in all new construction or renovation for which a drinking fountain is required beginning October 2025. It also requires the Maryland Department of Labor to adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of the Act.

Reducing the production of plastics and creating a zero-waste economy is one of our top concerns. Less Plastic Please spearheaded campaigns with several organizations in Howard County to advocate for reducing single-use plastics through two successful bills, [Plastic Bag Fee](#) and [Plastic Reduction Law](#). We also hosted a [webinar on the Story of Plastics in 2020](#). As we highlighted during the discussion, plastic pollution is an environmental justice and public health crisis: Fracking, plastics production, litter, and disposal in landfills and by incineration harm communities of color disproportionately. We believe that social justice, racial justice and environmental justice are all part of a single, globally connected Movement for Justice.

Water bottle filling stations along with water fountains make it much easier for citizens to reduce the amount of single use plastic beverage containers being used by providing easy drink access without having to purchase a beverage in a single use container. This bill provides a healthy and less expensive choice for citizens that they wouldn't as easily have without the bill.

Plastic water bottles are a large portion of the plastic beverage containers sold in Maryland, and in 2019, fewer than a quarter of all plastic beverage containers were actually recycled and made into new products, despite what the vast majority of consumers want or believe is happening when they drop their plastic into recycling bins. The rest is incinerated or transferred to landfills, or ends up as litter on the side of the road.

We urge a **favorable report for SB0096**.

Submitted for [Less Plastic Please](#)  
by Liz Feighner  
[LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com](mailto:LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com)

# **SB 96 - National Aquarium - Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Maggie Ostdahl

Position: FAV



# NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

**Date:** February 11, 2025

**Bill:** SB 96 – Water Bottle Filling Stations Requirement

**Position:** Support

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Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for SB 96. This legislation would require that a water bottle filling station or a combined water bottle filling station and drinking fountain be installed in new construction or renovations beginning October 1, 2025.

One of the National Aquarium's three overarching conservation goals is to stop plastic pollution. We do this through a holistic, solutions-focused approach, which includes implementing various plastic reduction and waste diversion measures throughout our operations. For instance, the National Aquarium has eliminated single use plastic foodware from our cafes. As part of our commitment to reducing plastic, the National Aquarium has installed 14 water bottle filling stations for guests and staff. In 2024, the Aquarium's water bottle filling stations avoided use of at least 130,000 plastic water bottles. The Aquarium installed its first water bottle filling stations in 2014 and since then we estimate they have resulted in nearly 3 million plastic bottles avoided.

The plastic pollution crisis has been well-documented as global plastic production has outpaced any other manufactured material, and the U.S. is one of the world's top generators of new plastic production and plastic waste. The vast majority of plastic is made from fossil fuels and every stage of the plastic use cycle contributes to climate change, air pollution and environmental justice concerns. In Maryland, more than 5 billion single use mainly plastic beverage containers are sold every year<sup>1</sup>, yet only about a quarter of those containers are recycled. As Maryland continues to improve recycling, we should also prioritize reduction and reuse. Water bottle filling stations encourage all of us to reduce our plastic consumption and replace single use plastic bottles with a healthier and cheaper alternative.

Addressing the harmful impacts of the plastic pollution crisis requires comprehensive systemic change and this legislation is one common sense solution. Increasing water bottle filling stations will help address plastic pollution, decrease costs of waste management and improve public health.

**We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 96.**

Contact:

**Ryan Fredriksson**

Vice President, Government Affairs

410-385-8276

[rfredriksson@aqua.org](mailto:rfredriksson@aqua.org)

**Maggie Ostdahl**

Sr. Conservation Policy Manager

410-385-8275

[mostdahl@aqua.org](mailto:mostdahl@aqua.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Market Analysis



# **SB 96-MDSierraClub\_fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV

**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.

Martha Ainsworth, Chair  
Chapter Zero Waste Team  
[Martha.Ainsworth@mdsierra.org](mailto:Martha.Ainsworth@mdsierra.org)

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
[Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org](mailto:Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org)

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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.

## **SB0096 Kranz Water bottle filling stations testim**

Uploaded by: Rhonda Kranz

Position: FAV

**Committee:** EEE  
**Testimony on:** SB-SB0096 – Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations – Requirement  
**Submitting:** Rhonda Kranz  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 11, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the EEE Committee. My name is Rhonda Kranz, and I strongly support SB00096: Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations – Requirement, which mandates the installation of water bottle filling stations in new construction and certain renovations across Maryland. This bill will have a wide range of positive impacts in Maryland in one low cost opportunity.

The positive impacts of this bill would include reduction of plastic that ends up in our waterways, neighborhoods, and even in our children's blood streams. Plastic production is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and as MD moves towards its climate goals this should be a consideration. It would provide safe drinking water in a region that has frequent problems with water quality, whether it be lead in pipes, or algae in household water supply as happened twice in my neighborhood last year. These are only a few of the benefits we would see from this bill.

Reducing the use of single use plastic bottles has been a goal in MD and the region for 30 years. This bill provides a good step forward in meeting our need to minimize plastic and all its dangerous impacts, and will provide a simple, no cost way for all our communities to acquire healthy and environmentally safe drinking water.

For these and many other reasons I urge you to pass SB00096.

## **Testimony in support of SB0096 - Environment - Wat**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

02/11/2025

Richard Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0096 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Environment - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

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

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0096, Environment - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

Maryland has an ambitious program to reduce waste and pollution. This bill is one component of that strategy dealing specifically with reduction in plastic waste from water in bottles. It implements a program to create water refilling stations to permit reuse of containers instead of discarding them into the environment.

According to a report from the World Economic Forum discussing a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) “We Can Cut Plastic Pollution by 80% by 2040 – here’s how” reduction of plastic bottle usage is a component of achieving that goal. <sup>1</sup>

NPR reported “The plastic problem isn't your fault, but you can be part of the solution.” <sup>2</sup> This forward-looking bill says that Maryland is listening and will become a model on adopting solutions to achieve our environmental goals.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0096.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/06/reduce-plastic-pollution-unep/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/12/1015296355/zero-waste-single-use-plastic-trash-recycle>

# **Water Bottle Filling Stations Support Written Test**

Uploaded by: Tom Taylor

Position: FAV

## **Water Bottle Filling Stations Support Written Testimony**

February 7, 2025

**To:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Subject: SB96:** Environment - Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requirement

Position: **Favorable**

I am writing in support of SB96, which will establish a requirement for a water bottle filling station, or a combined water bottle billing station and drinking fountain, in certain new construction or as part of certain renovations, beginning October 1, 2025.

This is common-sense legislation that will address the issue of the proliferation of single-use water bottles that enter the waste stream, wash into our waterways, and create unsightly litter in our neighborhoods and streets.

Good ecological stewardship requires that we reduce the amount of plastic that enters our environment and causes pollution issues that are harmful to wildlife and habitat.

As an active volunteer that advocates for streams and who has participated in stream clean-up efforts, I can personally testify to the amount of water bottles that end up in our waterways.

This legislation will reduce the amount of plastic that enters the state's environment and will improve Maryland's ecosystems. Making it a requirement in new construction and renovations will help set a standard for eco-friendly construction and move Maryland forward in achieving our sustainability and environmental goals.

I urge a favorable vote on SB96.

Sincerely,

Tom Taylor  
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## **SB 96 - Water Bottle Filling Stations - Requireme**

Uploaded by: Tom Ballentine

Position: UNF

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Oppose: SB 96 – Water Bottle Filling Stations – Installation Requirement**

Dear Chair, Feldman and Committee Members:

The NAIOP Maryland Chapters represent approximately 700 companies involved in all aspects of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use real estate. On behalf of our member companies, I am writing in opposition to SB 97 which creates a new subtitle in the Environment article entitled Water Bottle Filling Stations. The bill would override the current provisions of the International Plumbing Code and require the installation of water bottle filling stations in new construction and building renovations at all locations where water fountains are now installed.

NAIOP members provide access to water in kitchens, bathrooms, cleaning and laundry rooms, as well as other locations as required by the International Plumbing Code and to meet the needs of our tenants. Whether the fixture is a kitchen sink, water fountain, refrigerator-based water dispenser or water bottle filling station depends on a number of factors. In any event, most, if not all these fixtures can be used to refill water bottles. The one-size-fits-all nature of this bill and its mandate raises concerns on a number of levels.

The International Plumbing Code allows water bottle filling stations and water dispensers to be installed as a substitute for a portion of the required water fountains but does not require all water fountains to be water bottle filling stations due to operational, cost, and logistical considerations.

- **Functionality and Space** - Some water fountains might be in cramped spaces where adding a bottle filling station would be difficult. Not all locations have the space or layout to accommodate both traditional drinking fountains and water bottle filling stations. The code specifies that water bottle filling stations be ADA compliant and accessible which requires adequate clear floor space for either a forward or side approach. Where a bottle filling station is located over a drinking fountain, it must be installed in a manner that meets the required reach ranges for persons using a wheelchair.

- **Cost of Implementation** - Requiring all water fountains to include bottle filling stations could be expensive, especially in older buildings that were



**ADA COMPLIANT**

Units include clearance for maneuverability under and around them, so they're easier for everyone to access and ADA compliant when properly installed.

designed with traditional drinking fountains in mind. Retrofitting older plumbing systems could require significant investment and modification.

- **Demand and Occupant Needs** - While water bottle filling stations are in common use, the demand for them is not universal at all locations and in all types of buildings. Bottle filling stations in smaller buildings, locations with limited foot traffic or in tenant spaces that have en suite kitchens may be of little use. Bottle filling stations that are installed should be strategically placed in public areas, not at every water fountain location.
- **Operational Considerations** – SB 96's definition of water bottle filling station requires that the fixture have a water chiller, which will be a small but constant draw on the building's electric power system and contain a small amount of propane-based refrigerant which requires special handling. The definition also requires that the bottle filling station provides water filtration which necessitates periodic replacement of water filters and may be redundant to whole building filtration systems already in place. These are not significant barriers to the strategic use of these fixtures; however, they will have a cumulative impact over the billion or more square feet of commercial buildings that must be made compliant. Our members would prefer to have the discretion to weigh these considerations when deciding the location and number of water bottle filling stations that are installed.
- **Environmental Considerations** – Our member companies provide water bottle filling stations at strategic locations but do not see how installing them at all locations will materially reduce plastic bottle use. While we acknowledge reports that a low percentage of plastic materials that are recycled in Maryland, we would point out to the committee that the large office and mixed-use buildings managed by our member companies operate under recycling contracts. SB 96 will not change the behaviors that lead to the use and discarding of plastic bottles.

Finally, on behalf of our member companies, I urge the committee to adopt a very high bar for using your legislative authority to override building codes.

**For these reasons, NAIOP respectfully recommends your unfavorable report on SB 96.**

Sincerely,



Tom Ballentine, Vice President for Policy

NAIOP – Maryland Chapters, *The Association for Commercial Real Estate*

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members

Nick Manis – Manis, Canning Assoc.