

SB346 - Bottle bill- Testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV

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Religious Zionists of America
Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
Shomrei Emunah Congregation
Suburban Orthodox Congregation
Temple Beth Shalom
Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
Baltimore District

Written Testimony

SB346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – February 18, 2025 Support

Background: Senate Bill 346 would establish a program that would add a small refundable deposit (10-15 cents) to the price of beverages in glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers. The deposit is then refunded when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling.

The program would be implemented and financed by beverage producers, with strong oversight by MDE and enforceable targets (90% redemption rate). No implementation of enforcement responsibility by local government, so there is no burden on our local communities. Similar programs have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades, expanding worldwide to fight plastic pollution and litter.

Written Comments: The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* means to repair the world in which we live. As the advocacy arm of The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, we represent organizations that work to educate the community on sustainability and make strides towards repairing the world.

Plastic pollution is harmful to our communities. Maryland's beverage container litter is contributing to pollution in the State's waters, including the Chesapeake Bay, and elsewhere in the environment, threatening marine and other wildlife, and human health. About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold each year in Maryland, but only a quarter of them (1.4 billion) are captured for recycling.

Baltimore has made efforts to try to assist in mitigating the problem by establishing infrastructure like the Mr. Trash Wheel fleet in the harbor to collect waste that makes it into our waterways, but this is not enough. Habits must be broken to prevent more harm.

By reducing litter, we are in turn reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. This brings us closer to achieving the climate goals set for Maryland, and in turn helps to repair our world.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB346.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated

 **The Associated**
Jewish Federation of Baltimore

Maryland Residents Support SB 0346.pdf

Uploaded by: Allison Blood

Position: FAV

Maryland Residents Support the Maryland Bottle Bill!

The undersigned Maryland Residents are writing to express my strong support of the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program ([HB232/SB346](#)), also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

I strongly believe that adopting this legislation will reduce the amount of litter ending up in our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. Since 2014, Mr. Trash Wheel has collected 2.1 million plastic bottles from the Baltimore Harbor. It's time to put him on a diet!

The Maryland Bottle Bill will introduce a deposit-return system for beverage containers, including plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and glass bottles. This system has been proven effective in other states at reducing litter, promoting recycling, and conserving resources. By placing a monetary deposit on beverage containers, consumers are incentivized to return them for recycling, thereby reducing waste in our streets, parks, and waterways.

Not only does the Maryland Bottle Bill have environmental benefits, but it also has economic advantages. Implementing a deposit-return system would create jobs in recycling and waste management industries, stimulate local economies, and reduce costs associated with litter cleanup and landfill disposal.

Furthermore, this legislation aligns with Maryland's commitment to environmental stewardship and Chesapeake Bay restoration. By supporting the Maryland Bottle Bill, the State would demonstrate its dedication to preserving natural resources, reducing pollution, and combating climate change.

I urge you to carefully consider the benefits of the Maryland Bottle Bill and to take decisive action to support its implementation. Let us work together to create a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future for our State and for generations to come. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to seeing Maryland continue to lead the nation in environmental innovation and waste reduction.

Signed,

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Joe	Starnes	4413 Glenmore Ave	Baltimore MD 21206 US
Shawna	Zakrjewski	1421 Steuart St	Baltimore MD 21230 US
Carly	Kriewald	7713 Dover Rd	Glen Burnie MD 21060 US
Joe	Hopkins	717 Dunkirk Rd	Baltimore Maryland 21212 US
Miranda	Prather	210 Larch Ct	Middletown MD 21769-7825 US
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Amber	Nicholls	2900 Lord Baltimore Dr	LBB - Safety Baltimore Maryland 21244 US
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Maya	Lee	1321 Eutaw Pl 3R	Baltimore MD 21217 US
Erin	Hill	2809 Boston Street Apt 311	Baltimore MD 21224 US
Daryl	Stephens	3125 N Calvert St., Apt. 1	Baltimore MD 21218 US
Patricia	Sumner	1012 Patapsco Street	Baltimore MD 21230 US
Steven	Kain	4123 Dee Jay dr	Ellicott City MD 21042 US
Cameron	Martin	2 Hopkins Plaza	Baltimore MD 21201 US
Steve	Kohl	951 Fell st Apt. 707	Baltimore Md 21231 US
Courtney	Hollis	9923 Gable Ridge Terrace Apt. C	Rockville MD 20850 US
Allaire	Tetrault	11604 West Hill Dr	Rockville MD 20852 US
Brian	Zubek	1702 Hollins St	Baltimore Md 21223 US
Sarah	Hobart	2353 Boston Street	Baltimore MD 21224 US

Christian	Sieverts	1720 olive st	Baltimote Maryland 21230 US
Jennifer	Pflaumer	67 Bramblewood Drive	Berlin MD 21811 US
Delia	Lynch	1925 Drummond Rd	Catonsville MD 21228 US
Jason	Mah	306 Seminole Avenue	Catonsville MD 21228 US
Kim	Brock	9 N Curley St	Baltimore MD 21224 US
Margaret	Martin	334 Long Point Rd	Crownsville Maryland 21032 US
Cat	Falconer	1387 E Lombard st	Baltimore Maryland 21231 US
Jaime	Branaman	918 S Hanover St	Baltimore Md 21230 US
Elizabeth	Francis	3800 Falls Road	Baltimore MD 21211 US
Noelle	Wahl	1751 Covington Street	Baltimore MD 21230 US
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Cara	Groden	1725 Saint Paul St	Baltimore MD 21202 US
Michele	Berry	3509 Roland Ave Unit B	Baltimore MD 21211 US
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Jon	Merryman	5 Magruder Ave	Catonsville MD 21228 US
Alan	Cook	431 Magnolia Dr	Edgewater MD 21037 US
Kim	DeFranco	3506 Gough Street	Baltimore MD 21224 US
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JAMAR	STEPHENS	5402 Daywalt Ave	Baltimore MD 21206 US
Mark	Laakso	1025 Saint Paul St apt 4	Baltimore MD 21202 US
Robert	Matejka	2515 Boston St Unit 908	Baltimore MD 21224 US
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Kasia	Brodka	1720 Olive st	Baltimore Md 21230 US
Jen	Johnson	309 Royal Oak Dr	Bel air Md 21015 US
Soren	Charmsaz	39 West Lexington Street Apt 405	Baltimore MD 21201 US
Emily	Needles	622 S Newkirk St	Baltimore MD 21224 US
Clarissa	Madar	640 N Calvert St Unit C	Baltimore MD 21202 US
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Benjamin	Olding	42 Nichols St Apt 3	Chelsea MA 02150 US
Rachel	Bukoski	4228 Falls Road	Baltimore Maryland 21211 US
Corinne	Mona	8492 Frederick Rd	Ellicott City MD 21043 US
Louis	Fantinato	634 severn rd	Severna park Md 21146 US
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Damel	Goddard	102 Belmore Rd	Lutherville-Timonium MD 21093 US
Ana	Topasna	824 south bond street	Baltimore Maryland 21231 US
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Beth	Matys	951 Stormont Circle	Halethorpe MD 21227 US
Erin	Sloan	1228 Maple Ave	Halethorpe Maryland 21227 US
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Russell	Bowie	1699 Leadenhall St.	Baltimore Md 21230 US
Tawni	Stetson	26 N Streeper St	Baltimore MD 21224 US
Beth	Russo	204 s Durham st	Baltimore MD 21231 US
Ryan	Langley	6101 York Rd	Baltimore MD 21212 US
Abigail	Pierson	6779 Dorsey rd Apt 240	Elkridge Md 21075 US
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Linda	Obradovic	1311 Covington St	Baltimore MD 21230 US
Marco	Montero	125 n Milton ave	Baltimore Md 22304 US

Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore Favorable Test

Uploaded by: Allison Blood

Position: FAV

February 18, 2025

**SB 346- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund
and Litter Reduction Program
Position - Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for your time. My name is Allison Blood and I am here on behalf of the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore. I submit this testimony in favor of SB 346.

Representing major businesses and developers along the Baltimore Waterfront, Waterfront Partnership is a Business Improvement District responsible for maintaining, improving, and protecting Baltimore's Inner Harbor. In 2010 we set a goal, in partnership with the City, to have a swimmable and fishable Baltimore Harbor. To that end, we have supported many restoration efforts including the installation of four trash wheels in the Baltimore Harbor. We have used the data from trash collection to inform legislation and prove the efficacy of policy change to reduce plastic pollution including the statewide foam container ban and plastic bag bans in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We do this because it is good for the environment and because it is good for business.

The businesses that make up the Waterfront Partnership Improvement District pay us to collect litter with a cleaning budget of one point five million dollars a year, but that money would be better spent on events, landscaping, and attractions that bring people to the Inner Harbor. The same is true for saving taxpayer money by reducing municipal costs for litter removal and waste disposal as only 23% of recyclable material actually gets recycled. The rest is burned, buried, or littered with taxpayers footing the bill for unnecessary clean-up costs.

Container deposit laws have been beneficial in other ways: saving taxpayer money by reducing waste disposal costs, reducing our reliance on foreign oil, and creating new jobs in the recycling sector.

This bill would simultaneously save businesses money and increase revenue around the Harbor because a Harbor that is clean and healthy is one that people will visit time and again.

The Inner Harbor sits at the end of the Jones Falls stream that drains 64 square miles of land in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. When it rains, a tremendous amount of litter comes down the Jones Falls and covers the Harbor. Over the past nine years, Mr. Trash Wheel and the Trash Wheel family have been the last line of defense to prevent our Harbor from being covered with litter collecting over two point five million plastic bottles. This is only six-hundredths of ONE percent of the beverage containers produced in Maryland yearly that end up as trash or litter.

Capturing plastic bottles in our waterways is not a solution, it is an urgent problem and we need this Bottle Bill to create a real solution to reduce beverage container litter.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB 346. Thank you for your time.

Allison Blood, Environmental Program Manager
Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore
allison@waterfrontpartnership.org
650 S. Exeter St., Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21202

Maryland Bill SB0346 - Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Szunyog

Position: FAV

Testimony of
Andrew Szunyog
Sustainability Consultant in Washington, DC
to the
Maryland Senate
Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
SB0346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling
Refund and Litter Reduction Program
February 14, 2025

Good afternoon, I am testifying on my behalf in support of SB0346 which seeks to introduce a bill that would incentivize the collection and recycling of aluminum, glass, and plastic beverage containers. This bill will ultimately reduce the amount of trash and waste that pollutes and deteriorates our terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems while promoting environmental justice, creating new jobs, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

I live in East Capital Hill in Washington, DC, just a quarter-mile from the Anacostia River. I spend a lot of my time working and recreating within the Anacostia River watershed and have seen firsthand the negative effects plastic pollution has on our community and ecosystems. As you know, the Anacostia River watershed begins in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties and flows south into Washington, DC., connecting with the Potomac River, the Chesapeake Bay, and lastly, the Atlantic Ocean. Much of the plastic waste that ends up in the Anacostia River here in Washington, DC is the result of stormwater runoff that collects the trash and debris in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. SB0346 is a key piece of legislation that will significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste that ends up here in Washington, DC, and further downstream in the Potomac, Chesapeake, and Atlantic waterways.

Here are several of the program benefits that are important to highlight:

- This program would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, reducing litter and plastic pollution and increasing the region's water quality.
- This program will quadruple Maryland's current estimated recycling rate of 25%.
- This program would generate an additional 13.3 tons of aluminum, 47.6 tons of PET plastic, 7.8 tons of HDPE plastic, and nearly 160 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers annually. This would ultimately eliminate 231.7 metric tons of CO2 generated by creating new aluminum, plastic, and glass containers from virgin materials.

The success of the beverage container deposit laws enacted in 10 U.S. states and across Europe shows the dramatic and positive impact this type of legislation can have on our communities and the environment. I urge you to pass this bill and demonstrate environmental leadership within the Mid-Atlantic region. The success of similar legislation in Washington, DC is dependent on the State of Maryland adopting this bill.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to voice my support for SB0346.

Beverage Container Recycling

Uploaded by: Anna Awimbo

Position: FAV



*Forming Faithful Stewards,
Caring for Sacred Waters*

PO Box 6791
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chairman Brian Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 346 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Position: **FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Brian Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

On behalf of Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC), I write to urge your **support** for the **Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program** bill (Senate Bill 346).

As a coalition of faith communities committed to environmental stewardship and the restoration of our shared natural resources, we recognize the moral and spiritual imperative to protect our waterways, reduce pollution, and promote sustainable solutions that honor the integrity of creation.

The Chesapeake Bay is one of the most vital and cherished ecosystems in our region, providing habitat for diverse wildlife and supporting the livelihoods of countless communities. Yet, plastic pollution and litter continue to degrade its waters, threatening aquatic life and diminishing the beauty and health of this sacred resource. Every day, thousands of discarded bottles and containers enter our rivers and streams, ultimately making their way into the Bay.

The Maryland Bottle Bill offers a proven, effective solution to reducing plastic waste by incentivizing recycling and shifting consumer behavior. **In states where similar laws have been enacted, beverage container recycling rates have significantly increased, litter has decreased, and municipalities have experienced cost savings in waste management.** By implementing this legislation, Maryland has the opportunity to take meaningful action toward a cleaner environment while fostering a culture of responsibility and sustainability.

For faith communities, environmental action is not just a policy issue—it is a moral obligation. Our scriptures and teachings emphasize the importance of caring for God's creation and protecting the most vulnerable. Pollution disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color, exacerbating existing environmental injustices. By supporting the Maryland Bottle Bill, we stand in solidarity with those affected by pollution and affirm our commitment to environmental justice.

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake urges the General Assembly to pass the Maryland Bottle Bill and take a significant step toward a cleaner, healthier Chesapeake Bay. We believe that stewardship of the environment is an act of faith, and we call on our state leaders to enact policies that reflect our shared responsibility to care for creation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Anna Awimbo".

Anna Awimbo
Director of Leadership Development

Ltr to Sen. Watson - Support for HB 232 SB 346 -

Uploaded by: Ashleigh Diaz

Position: FAV



City of Bowie

15901 Fred Robinson Way
Bowie, Maryland 20716

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Ron Watson, Senator
121 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: City of Bowie Support for HB 232/SB 346

Dear Senator Watson,

The City of Bowie urges you to support HB 232/SB 346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. We understand that this program would add a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit would be fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit Stewardship Organization, not by the City or its residents. We expect that the Maryland Department of the Environment will provide strong oversight.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it could capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, divert an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, and reduce pollution from littered plastic bottles that contaminate the local environment, streams and eventually the Chesapeake Bay.

This program would benefit our residents by reducing unsightly litter, increasing recycling, and reducing the amount of municipal solid waste that the City must collect and process. It is estimated that the City of Bowie could save approximately \$100,000 in tipping fees if bottles were diverted from our waste stream.

We urge you to support HB 232/SB 346, to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, provide cleaner parks and waterways, and create savings for municipalities and local taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
Timothy J. Adams
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Adrian A. Bofo, District 23 Delegate
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr., District 23 Delegate
The Honorable Kym Taylor, District 23 Delegate
The Honorable Ingrid S. Watson, PGCC District 4 Council Member

SB 346 - Bottle Deposit - BWB Favorable (1).pdf

Uploaded by: barbara johnson

Position: FAV



February 14, 2025

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (SB 346)

Position: FAVORABLE

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

Blue Water Baltimore is a local nonprofit organization with a mission to protect and restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams, and Harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities. **On behalf of Blue Water Baltimore, I write to express our strong support for SB 346.**

Blue Water Baltimore, home of the Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper, is part of the international Waterkeeper Alliance that is composed of over 300 watchdog organizations with a mission to protect and restore waterways all over the world. Our licensed Waterkeeper jurisdiction includes the entirety of the Patapsco and Back River watersheds, which means that Blue Water Baltimore is uniquely positioned among environmental NGOs in the region to focus on the health and prosperity of these waterways, and that of the people who live, work, and recreate around them.

The Patapsco and Back Rivers are two of the most polluted tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay as evidenced from our routine water quality monitoring and assessments from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.¹² Many of the longstanding challenges with water quality and failing water infrastructure in the Baltimore region are rooted in decades of inequitable infrastructure investments and environmental racism. **Polluted streams and rivers are the manifestation of these systemic problems, and the people of Baltimore are being robbed of their inherent right to clean water every day.**

A portion of the tidal Patapsco River, the Baltimore Harbor, is one of the only waterways in the United States listed as "impaired" under the federal Clean Water Act for trash. As such, regulators have established an accompanying Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or "pollution diet" for trash in the Harbor. **This means that trash is so prevalent in the streets and streams around Baltimore that the Harbor itself is not meeting water quality standards and that significant efforts are necessary to stop the damage and heal the Patapsco River.**

Bottle trash, particularly plastic, is a pervasive blight in our waterways, posing a serious threat to the environment and aquatic life. As plastic breaks down into microplastics and nanoplastics, it further contaminates the environment, creating long-term ecological damage. This pollution doesn't just affect wildlife - it enters the human food chain through the consumption of contaminated seafood, and bioaccumulates in our brains at an alarming rate.³ **Enacting a bottle deposit bill is crucial to reducing plastic waste and protecting both our environment and public health.**

¹ Baltimore Water Watch. 2025. Blue Water Baltimore. <http://www.BaltimoreWaterWatch.org>.

² 2023 Chesapeake Bay Report Card. University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. <https://ecoreportcard.org/report-cards/chesapeake-bay/watershed-health/>

³ Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains. Nature Medicine. Nihart et al. February 3, 2025. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03453-1>

In my role as your Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper, my team and I routinely patrol the local streams that flow into the Patapsco and Back Rivers to monitor water quality and seek out chronic sources of pollution. **I have seen first-hand the huge rafts of plastic bottles that get trapped and restrict flow in our storm drains and urban streams, which contribute to flooding during heavy rain events.** Swaths of trash, especially plastic bottles, act as high-water marks along the Gwynns Falls trail where the stream has crested the banks. The visible trash is only a fraction of what makes its way downstream into the Baltimore Harbor, the Patapsco River, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

Plastic, glass, and metal bottle trash is a nuisance in our streets and our streams, but **even when beverage containers are properly discarded instead of being littered, their disposal can contribute to the compounding harms that disproportionately impact historically disenfranchised and overburdened communities.** Baltimore County's CY2021 recycling rate was 28.88%, and Baltimore City's CY2021 recycling rate was 22.28%.⁴ The remainder of the waste generated in these two counties is buried in landfills or burned in incinerators, which exacerbates the environmental injustices shouldered by lower-income residents living in close proximity to them.

A beverage container deposit program is a common-sense and proven strategy to reduce litter, increase recycling rates, and incentivize environmental stewardship by turning trash into treasure with a fully-refundable deposit on plastic, glass, and metal bottles. Ten states in the US have already paved the way for this type of program in Maryland, and the results are clear; states with bottle deposit programs are achieving recycling rates of up to 65%, which is significantly higher than both Maryland's rate and the national average of 32%.⁵⁶

From July 2024 through February 2025, **Blue Water Baltimore collected 524 signatures from Maryland residents who support this legislation** and the creation of a state-wide bottle deposit program. That sign-on letter, and the names of individuals who support the measure, are included as an attachment to this testimony (*Attachment #6*).

The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program will result in:

- **Less trash** in our streets, streams, rivers, and Chesapeake Bay.
- Fewer plastic, glass, and metal bottles going to the BRESKO incinerator, which means **cleaner air and less pollution** in our environment.
- **More space** in our landfills.
- **Reduced strain on public waste management** with a system that removes beverage containers from the municipal waste stream.

Baltimore City led the charge to ban the use of Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) Foam in 2018 and that effort helped persuade State lawmakers to do the same shortly thereafter. Baltimore City and Baltimore County have joined other Maryland jurisdictions to ban single-use plastic bags from most restaurants and retail

⁴ County Recyclables by Commodity in Tons for CY21. Compiled by the Maryland Department of the Environment from Reports Submitted for CY21.
<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/Documents/County%20Commodity%20CY21.pdf>

⁵ The 50 States of Recycling. A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates, pp. 15-17. December 2023. Eunomia Research & Consulting Inc.

⁶ National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Last updated on November 8, 2024.
<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>

outlets, and we hope to see that change replicated on a state-wide basis soon. The next step needed to tackle Baltimore's waterway trash problem is to establish a beverage container deposit program to reduce the number of plastic bottles that plague our neighborhoods and shorelines; but we know that this effort cannot operate in a vacuum, and it will only be successful if it is implemented as a state-wide solution.

I am including a handful of pictures from our local waterways to show the prevalence of bottle trash in our streams and rivers (*Attachments #1-5*). While my focus is on streams and rivers around Baltimore, bottle trash negatively impacts waterways throughout the state of Maryland. **For all of the reasons outlined above, Blue Water Baltimore urges this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 346.**

Sincerely,

Alice Volpitta
Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper
Blue Water Baltimore
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Attachment #1: Picture of bottles and trash accumulated in the Powder Mill Run. (p. 4)

Attachment #2: Picture of bottles and trash accumulated at Masonville Cove. (p. 5)

Attachment #3: Picture of bottles and trash accumulated in East Branch Herbert Run. (p. 6)

Attachment #4: Picture of bottles that have accumulated as a high-water mark at Ferry Bar Park. (p. 7)

Attachment #5: Picture of bottles that have accumulated in the Gwynns Falls stream. (p. 8)

Attachment #6: Sign-on letter and signatures from 524 Maryland constituents. (pp. 9-21)

Attachment #1: Bottles and assorted trash accumulated in the Powder Mill Run. Baltimore County, MD. 3/16/2014.



**Attachment #2: Bottles and assorted trash accumulated at Masonville Cove. Baltimore City, MD.
3/24/2011.**



Attachment #3: Bottles and assorted trash accumulated along the banks of East Branch Herbert Run. Baltimore County, MD. 4/14/2017.



Attachment #4: Bottle trash that has accumulated as a high-water mark at Ferry Bar Park. Baltimore City, MD. 8/28/2015.



Attachment #5: Plastic and metal bottles that have accumulated along the banks of the Gwynns Falls stream. Baltimore, MD. 2/11/2024.



Attachment #6: Sign-on letter and signatures from 524 Maryland constituents who support a Maryland Bottle Bill. Signatures collected at Blue Water Baltimore community engagement events from July 2024 - February 2025.



Dear Maryland Legislators,

We, the undersigned community members of Maryland, hereby petition for the implementation of a statewide bottle deposit program. This initiative is crucial for the following reasons:

- Plastic pollution and waste management are pressing issues globally and locally. By implementing a bottle deposit program, we can significantly **reduce the amount of plastic and glass waste** ending up in landfills, incinerators and natural environments.
- The recycling industry plays a vital role in the state's economy, providing jobs and economic growth opportunities. A bottle deposit program would **create new employment** in recycling facilities, collection centers, and related sectors.
- A bottle deposit program encourages consumers to adopt recycling habits by providing a financial incentive. It promotes **environmental stewardship** from a young age and fosters a culture of sustainability.
- A bottle deposit program incentivizes proper disposal and reduces littering. **Cleaner streets, parks, and water bodies** contribute to **strong communities**, enhancing community pride and reducing public health risks.
- There is strong public support for bottle deposit programs. Residents recognize the benefits of recycling incentives and are willing to participate. Many neighboring states and jurisdictions have already successfully implemented bottle deposit programs, providing valuable models and frameworks for adaptation and implementation at the state level.

A Beverage container deposit program, or a “bottle bill,” would be a highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter in our waterways, incinerators, and community spaces.

Sincerely,

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SB346_Brooks.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 346
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and
Litter Reduction Program/ "The Maryland Bottle Bill"

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 18, 2025

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB346 — Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill. The purpose of this bill is to create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland to reduce beverage container litter, improve environmental quality, and reduce costs for local governments.

Of the 5.5 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland each year, only 25% are recycled. The other four billion containers a year are left to waste: in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways or even incinerated. Beverage container litter is pervasive. More than half the trash captured in traps on the Anacostia River is beverage containers. The Environmental Protection Agency has declared the Anacostia watershed and Baltimore Harbor to be impaired with trash. Our state, the largest estuary in the country — the Chesapeake Bay — also has two of three water bodies in the country that are impaired by trash and regulated by the EPA under the Clean Water Act. Plastic litter floating down our waterways is contributing to a plastic pollution crisis. This debris breaks into smaller pieces that threaten both wildlife and human health.

To reduce litter wastage, and recover more of these containers for recycling, ten other states have implemented successful beverage container deposit programs. These programs aim to change consumer behavior by adding a small refundable deposit to the price of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the containers are returned for recycling. Two states — Michigan and Oregon — have even achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit. Programs like this reduce littering and encourage recycling by providing consumers an incentive to return containers for refunds rather than discarding them.

How the Program Would Work

SB346 would add a 10-15 cent deposit on the price of beverages in glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers, depending on the size of the container. The deposits would be fully refunded when the empty containers are returned for recycling. The program would be designed to make return of empty containers and availability of refunds as convenient as possible to consumers and businesses.

Customers would return bottles and cans or at a convenient retailer's place of business using reverse vending machines, a bag drop, other redemption method, or at convenient dedicated redemption facilities. Based on experience in other states, the most convenient location to return containers for a refund is at a retailer that sells beverages in redeemable beverage containers. This reduces the need for a separate trip to return them.

- Reverse vending machines accept individual containers, one at a time, counting and verifying that the containers were subject to a deposit, crushing them in the back of the machine, and issuing a scrip to the customer for the amount of the refund owed, which can be cashed in at the retailer's checkout. They also help to prevent fraud.
- Bag drops take the redemption outside of the retail establishment and are usually located in parking lots. Customers create an account and may leave multiple unsorted containers of different types in a program drop-off bag with their personal barcode affixed. The bags are collected by the system operator, counted and sorted off-site, and the customer receives the refunded deposits in their account.

Restaurants, bars, hotels, and large venues where customers consume beverages on the premises would be able to obtain a refund when the empty containers are picked up by the system operator. Both retail establishments and "on premises" sellers of containers, like restaurants, sports venues, and hotels, will receive a small handling fee per container for collection and preliminary sorting.

The program would be operated by a nonprofit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization selected by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), representing all producers that sell or distribute beverages in the state. MDE would provide substantial oversight, approving stewardship plans and annual reports, and setting the program's convenience standards and handling fees for redemption points. An Advisory Council of stakeholders will advise MDE on plan approval, implementation, and performance.

The program would be self-financed from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. The program pays for itself and is budget-neutral, as documented in the Fiscal and Policy Note. A portion of unclaimed deposits will fund a Beverage Container Recycling Refund Grant program, administered by MDE to finance projects to develop reusable and refillable beverage container

systems, public water fountains and refill stations, and projects to reduce beverage container litter.

There would be no obligations for implementation or enforcement by local governments in the program. They will be eligible to set up their own redemption centers and receive a handling fee for returned containers, if they choose to. Most would realize cost savings from not having to finance the collection or processing of beverage container waste or recycling, or the cost of financing litter clean-ups. However, in the event that a local government can document a net loss attributable to the deposit program, this initiative would provide compensation during the first three years of operation.

The Program's Targets

The deposit would be enforced beginning on January 1, 2028. Based on experience in other states, the program should reduce beverage container litter by at least 70-84%. Overall, this objective aims to achieve a 70% redemption rate for beverage containers by December 2029 and a 90% redemption rate by December 2032. The program's reuse goal is that at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in Maryland will be refillable by December 2035.

The Program's Benefits

SB346 would capture an estimated 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually in Maryland, including more than 2 billion plastic bottles, thus reducing litter and plastic pollution while diverting those containers to recycling. There are many other benefits it would inspire:

- Reduce the volume of litter and plastic pollution from beverage containers by quadrupling Maryland's recycling rate for beverage containers, from about 25% to at least 90% of beverage containers sold in the state.
- Increase the availability of high quality, food-grade materials that can be used in the manufacture of new beverage containers and reduce 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 more than 50,000 cars from the road.
- Provide cost savings for taxpayers and local governments. Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection and processing of the three-quarters of beverage containers currently being disposed of in the waste stream or littered.
- Create lots of new jobs in recycling and servicing redemption technologies. Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration of beverage containers.
- Serve as a launching pad for investments in reusable and refillable beverage containers, further promoting a circular economy and zero waste.
- Pose no burden on taxpayers. The program is self-financing.

Conclusion

SB346 would make producers responsible for reducing beverage container litter and diverting empty beverage containers from disposal, increasing their recovery for recycling. Additional legislation is needed to hold producers responsible for rightsizing packaging, redesigning hard-to-recycle packaging for recyclability and reducing its toxicity. These two measures complement each other, and both need to be passed.

We do not need to wait for completion of the Recycling Needs Assessment authorized in 2023 as input for the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging bill to take action on the bottle bill. The Recycling Needs Assessment will evaluate policies affecting Maryland's recycling system; it will not assess programs to reduce litter. We already know that Maryland has a beverage container litter and plastic pollution crisis and that bottle bills are a proven and effective solution for reducing beverage container litter. Three of the five states, with an EPR for Packaging program, already have independent bottle bills.

Lastly, Gonzales Research and Media Services was commissioned by the Maryland Sierra Club to conduct a [statewide public opinion poll](#) to understand the support of Maryland voters for the "Bottle Bill." The results found overwhelming support for a Maryland bottle bill -- 91% of Maryland voters would support a beverage container deposit program -- and 95% of poll respondents are concerned about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution. Not only is a Bottle Bill in Maryland widely supported by the people, it will also transform our state, significantly reduce the amount of plastic litter in our environment, and reduce costs for local governments.

For these reasons I am requesting a favorable report on SB346.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks

Testimony Supporting SB0346.pdf

Uploaded by: Carlos Sanchez

Position: FAV

Testimony Supporting SB0346
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 18, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carlos Sanchez. I am a youth leader dedicated to building community power for environmental justice. I work with fellow residents at the South Baltimore Community Land Trust to make development without displacement and zero waste a reality. In 2020, we helped craft Baltimore's first Zero Waste plan, which was passed by city council and prioritized this bill as a critical step to move our city away from reliance on landfills and incineration. Now, in 2025, we are still waiting for Maryland to take this essential step forward.

As a resident of South Baltimore and someone who works in Curtis Bay, I live with the daily consequences of Maryland's failure to pass a pro-zero-waste bottle bill. Curtis Bay has an Environmental Justice (EJ) score of 100% according to the Maryland Department of the Environment's screening tool. The area ranks in the 91st percentile for asthma-related emergency room visits and the 88th percentile for low infant birth rates and heart attack discharges. These statistics are not abstract—they reflect the real struggles of my community.

This bill, informed by environmental justice communities, can provide tangible benefits:

1. **Reduce Pollution:** It will decrease toxic air pollution from incinerating plastics and cut greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **Save Taxpayer Dollars:** Local governments will save millions in waste disposal costs, which can be reinvested in zero-waste initiatives.
3. **Create Jobs:** This bill will generate employment opportunities in recycling and waste management.

Every day without this legislation, my community pays the price. In Lakeland, where I live, I wake up to the sight of the BRESKO trash-burning incinerator a mile away, breathing in its toxic emissions. In Curtis Bay, where I work, I walk past alleys filled with illegal dumping, often bottles and plastics. I speak with neighbors worried about asthma, struggling to feel pride in their community, and losing time with their families because they're cleaning up litter. Meanwhile, trash trucks carry more waste to the city landfill in South Baltimore, where ashes from incinerated bottles are dumped.

This is what it feels like to live next to a broken waste system—one that burns, buries, and pollutes our neighborhoods. It's unsafe, unhealthy, and unsustainable.

Maryland has a choice. By voting for this bill, you can help repair our waste system and bring relief to environmental justice communities like mine. While it won't solve everything, this legislation is a crucial step toward reducing plastic waste, cutting toxic emissions, and improving our shared environment and health. I urge you to issue a favorable report.

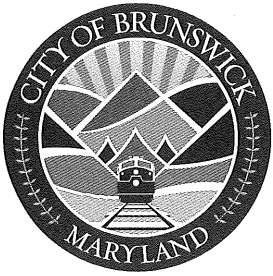
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Carlos Sanchez

Beverage Container Bill Letter 2025-02-14.pdf

Uploaded by: Carrie Myers

Position: FAV



THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK MARYLAND

1 WEST POTOMAC STREET · BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND 21716 · (301) 834-7500

February 14, 2025

Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Senator Brian Feldman, Chair

The City of Brunswick urges you to support HB 232/SB 346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would add a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit Stewardship Organization, not by the City or its residents. The Maryland Department of the Environment will provide strong oversight.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it would capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, diverting an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing pollution from littered plastic bottles that break down in the environment and get washed into the Chesapeake Bay. Recent polling has found that more than 90% of Maryland's voting public would support the Bottle Bill.

This program would benefit our residents by reducing unsightly litter, increasing recycling, and reducing the amount of municipal solid waste that the City must collect and process. The City would not be required to implement or enforce the program but has the option to set up its own redemption center and receive a handling fee per container to finance it, paid for by the Stewardship Organization.

On behalf of the Council of Brunswick, I urge you to support HB 232/SB 346, to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, provide cleaner parks and waterways, and create savings for municipalities and local taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Nathan Brown, Mayor

LWVMD - SB 346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recyc

Uploaded by: Casey Hunter

Position: FAV



Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB 346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

POSITION: Support

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: February 18, 2025

Since the emergence of the environment movement in the 1970's, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes in expanding reuse and recycling efforts, and is an active proponent of national beverage container deposit programs.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports SB 346**, which would establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, a beverage container deposit program to increase recycling and reduce litter pollution. Under this program, Marylanders would receive a 10-15 cent refund for each beverage container they return for recycling.

Recycling refund programs are proven to boost recycling rates and reduce litter. These programs also work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as they reduce the demand for virgin plastic production. Plastic products are made using fossil fuels - which have been established as a leading driver of the climate crisis. Maryland has established goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2031 and reach net-zero by 2045. **SB 346** would help the state achieve these goals by reducing our reliance on virgin plastic production.

SB 346 would benefit the environment, and benefit all Marylanders. Expanding Maryland's recycling efforts is critical in order to protect the health of our communities, maintain the quality of our environment, and mitigate the climate crisis.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **strongly urges a favorable report on SB 346.**

SB0346_Beverage_Container_and_Litter_Reduction_Pro

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0346

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

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 favor of SB0346 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.

This bill, if enacted, creates the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund Program, beginning operation in January 2028. It will require -

- A small deposit added to the price of glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers (10¢-15¢)
- A refund of the deposit when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling

The program is implemented and financed by beverage producers and will have enforceable targets and strong oversight from Maryland Department of the Environment. It is expected that Maryland can recover $\geq 90\%$ of beverage containers with 3.5 billion fewer wasted containers/year as well as an overall reduction in litter and reduced costs to local governments. Additionally, it incentivizes investment in refillable beverage containers and increases availability of high-quality, food-grade materials.

This is clearly a direction that we should be going in. Our members support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

SB 346 written testimony from Anacostia Watershed

Uploaded by: Christopher Williams

Position: FAV



Testimony of
Christopher E. Williams, President and CEO
Anacostia Watershed Society
to the
Maryland Senate
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
In support of SB 0346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling
Refund and Litter Reduction Program
February 18, 2025

Good afternoon. I am testifying today on behalf of the over 10,000 members, supporters and volunteers of the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS). The Anacostia watershed is a 176 square mile area drained by the Anacostia River, two-thirds of which is in Prince George's and Montgomery counties in Maryland. Founded in 1989, AWS is a small organization of activists, advocates, experts, and educators working to conserve and restore the Anacostia watershed for all who live here and for future generations. And it is so much more. AWS is hundreds of volunteers from Maryland and DC in the field almost every day, picking up trash, monitoring pollution, planting trees and wetland plants, propagating wildlife, and removing invasive species. We are thousands of young students, learning about the natural history and ecology of the watershed. We are scores of naturalists-in-training, preparing to be conservation leaders in Maryland and DC communities. We are neighbors and friends in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, brought together by a shared love for our local watershed and a common determination to see it restored to health.

AWS has long experience battling trash pollution in the Anacostia watershed. In addition to regular volunteer trash clean-ups across the region, AWS advocacy efforts have been instrumental in the establishment of local limitations or bans of Styrofoam containers, single use plastic bags, plastic straws, and plastic utensils, all of which were tremendous sources of trash pollution that have since been visibly reduced, in some cases dramatically.¹

Of all the threats to river health that plague the Anacostia watershed – sewage overflows, toxic pollutants, urban run-off, sedimentation, wetlands and forest loss – the most starkly visible is trash. After a heavy rain, thousands of pounds of trash flows from streets, parking lots, and

¹ For example, a recent study by AWS determined that occurrence of Styrofoam in Anacostia watershed trash traps has plummeted by over 75 percent since the prohibition of Styrofoam containers in DC, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County.

storm drains into streams across the watershed and ultimately into the river's mainstem. Visitors to the river see the result: every eddy and small inlet cluttered with food wrappers, chip bags, single use plastic cups and lids, straws, and aluminum, glass, and plastic single-use beverage containers. Of all the trash collected by AWS trash traps, which are designed to intercept garbage flowing into the river, by far the most ubiquitous piece is the plastic beverage bottle. This trash fouls wildlife habitat, interfering with foraging, feeding, and other behaviors, and is sometimes ingested by wildlife. Moreover, the data suggest that over 70% of the pieces of trash flushed into the river will ultimately sink beneath the surface, raising troubling questions about just how much plastic waste is accumulating on the riverbed and in the water column, and how much that unseen trash is affecting the fish, wildlife and plants of the Anacostia River ecosystem.



A great blue heron finds itself on an island of trash. Wildlife struggling amidst trash is an all too common sight on rivers and streams in Maryland. Note the preponderance of plastic bottles.

In addition, plastic bottles and other trash foul natural areas important to people. The Anacostia watershed is entirely urban and suburban, and many of the parks and green spaces in Prince George's and Montgomery County are along streams and creeks in the watershed. These spaces foster social interaction, exercise, play, and provide places to get away from the noise and bustle of the city.

There is a growing body of evidence that access to urban green spaces is vitally important to our mental, physical, social, and emotional health.² Specific benefits include a higher reported quality of life, lower stress, better mood, and a reduction in mental distress. However, the benefits of urban green space are diminished if the green space itself is stressful or unpleasant to be in. Visible litter makes the environment less inviting, and reduces these benefits.

As the plastic trash decomposes, microscopic pieces are chipped off. These microplastics and nano-plastics persist in the environment for many years, and we are only beginning to learn about their potential negative impacts. For example, a study on the impact of microplastics on fish found damaged digestive and reproductive systems, and an increased chance of mortality.³ Freshwater mussels, organisms essential to the health of the Anacostia watershed, can also be highly impacted by microplastics. Several studies from other watersheds have found that mussels exposed to microplastics suffer from reduced reproductive success, which reduces the resilience of mussel populations facing the many other challenges of living in an urban river.⁴ In other words, microplastics can have cascading health effects for the organisms and populations exposed to them including, potentially, humans. In fact, studies show that humans are ingesting more and more plastic, with recent evidence suggesting that we are constantly taking in significant amounts of micro- and nano-plastics as we breathe, as we drink, and as we eat.⁵

Five point five billion single use beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year.⁶ That is an average of over 15 million plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass bottles purchased, used, and disposed of every day. However, despite curbside pick-up, **less than a quarter of all that trash is actually captured for recycling**. The rest, over 4 billion otherwise recyclable containers, never get into the recycling stream. That is roughly 2 bottles and cans per each of Maryland's 6.2 million residents **per day, every day**, going to rapidly filling, often leaking landfills, to incinerators to be burned into toxic air pollution, or into our neighborhood streets, parks, and rivers.

In AWS's corner of Maryland, our dedicated volunteers have since 1989 removed on average about 42 tons of trash per year from the streams and wetlands of the Anacostia. Today, almost 60% of that trash by weight is plastic bottles. We're proud of our clean-up efforts, but we can only round up a small fraction of the millions of beverage containers that foul the watershed so thoroughly that it is one of only three bodies of water in the U.S. that must be regulated for trash under the federal Clean Water Act (TMDL).

² Numerous studies support this conclusion. See <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-021-10474-7/tables/2>

³ Buyun. Md Simul, *Effects of Microplastics on Fish and Human Health*, Frontiers in Environmental Science, vol. 10, March 2022

⁴ Scherer, Christian et al, *Interactions of Microplastics with Freshwater Biota*, The Handbook of Environmental Chemistry vol. 58

⁵ Kieran D. Cox, Garth A. Covernton, Hailey L. Davies, John F. Dower, Francis Juanes, Sarah E. Dudas, *Human Consumption of Microplastics*, Environ. Sci. Technol. 2019, 53, 12, 7068–7074, June 5, 2019; *Dietary and inhalation exposure to nano- and microplastic particles and potential implications for human health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2022

⁶ Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Marketing Data, 2019



The result of a volunteer clean-up on a stream in the Anacostia watershed on April 22, 2023. The transparent bags are recyclable bottles and cans. The black bags contain all other trash collected. This ratio (about 60-70% recyclables) is typical.

AWS believes that SB 0346 will significantly reduce litter and plastic pollution in the Anacostia and in all of Maryland's rivers and streams. Data from other jurisdictions that have implemented such programs are encouraging. In 6 of the 10 states with deposit/refund laws in place, researchers have examined the impact of the program on litter found on highways. These states— Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Vermont, and New York— have seen a 40-80% decrease in container litter, which contributed to a 10-39% reduction in total litter.⁷

Data specifically from river cleanups in Massachusetts, another deposit/refund state, suggest that their program has a substantial impact on the amount of litter in rivers, streams, and wetlands as well. In Massachusetts, only containers holding carbonated drinks (beer, malt, carbonated soft drinks) and mineral water are eligible to be returned. Beverage market share data showed that deposit eligible containers made up 76% of sales, and non-deposit eligible containers were 24% of sales. Yet, data collected from river clean-ups revealed that deposit eligible containers made up only 19% of the containers collected and non-deposit containers

⁷ Schuyler, Qamar et al, *Economic incentives reduce plastic inputs to the ocean*, Marine Policy, vol. 96, pp 250-255

made up 81%. This evidence strongly suggests that the incentive provided by the deposit/refund program in Massachusetts routed the bulk of eligible beverage containers to reuse and recycling, while containers with no such incentive littered the riverbanks.⁸

We are facing not just a “litter” problem in Maryland. This is an environmental and impending public health crisis that needs to be forcefully addressed without delay. The type of deposit/return/recycle system laid out in SB 0346 has dramatically increased recycling rates in 10 U.S. states and across Europe. In fact, it has been demonstrated that return/recycle incentive systems work hand in hand and indeed are a necessary part of Extended Producer Responsibility programs. As stated above, in Maryland less than 25% of recyclable beverage containers are captured for recycling; in deposit/return states, that figure is 70% and higher, sometimes much higher. And we have decades of data to demonstrate these systems reduce pollution and are remarkably cost effective.

The proven benefits of deposit/return systems like SB 0346 include:

- A dramatically increased beverage container recycling rate in Maryland. The estimated recycling rate, currently only 25% of containers sold in the state, would increase to more than 90% with SB 0346.⁹
- Reduced beverage container litter and plastic pollution and an increase in water quality. The system would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, keeping that trash out of our neighborhoods, streets, parks, and rivers.
- Reduced 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 money for taxpayers and local governments. SB 0346 would require beverage producers to finance the costs of collection, processing, and recycling of beverage containers, diverting those materials from landfills and incinerators and saving costs for taxpayers and local governments.
- New job opportunities in collection, redemption, hauling, and processing recyclable material. In fact, recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times more jobs as landfilling or incineration.

There is no reason to delay and every reason to get a deposit/return system in place in Maryland as soon as possible. AWS strongly supports SB 0346, and we urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to favorably report out the bill.

⁸ Cohen, Russ, Worcester Earth Day Cleanup, April 2003; Cohen, Russ, Blackstone Valley Riverways Clean Up Day, October 2007, Massachusetts Riverways Program. See bottlebill.org

⁹ This is the target expressed in HB 0232, and it is achievable. Among the ten U.S states with bottle bills, recycling rates today range as high as 87%. See <https://www.tomra.com/reverse-vending/media-center/feature-articles/bottle-bill-states-and-how-they-work>



A marsh in the Anacostia watershed choked with plastic bottles.

SB346_IndivisibleHoCoMD_FAV_Konny.pdf

Uploaded by: Crystal Konny

Position: FAV



SB346 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Testimony before Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 18, 2024

Position: Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 900+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB346**, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. We appreciate the leadership of Senator Brooks and his colleagues for sponsoring this important legislation.

The bill establishes a program that will collect a small deposit for each bottle purchased. The deposits will be refunded when the container is returned to the retailer or a redemption facility. Retailers and redemption facilities receive a handling fee for processing the returned bottles. The program will be self-financing, creating no new costs for the taxpayers.

Approximately 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, and fewer than a quarter are recycled. Three-quarters of the beverage containers end up as litter, or are incinerated or dumped in landfills. Containers that are left in the wild are very problematic. Such containers, especially plastic ones, are harmful to both the environment and to wildlife, particularly in marine environments like the Chesapeake Bay.

This legislation will increase the source of recycled materials for use in new bottles, and will work hand in hand with HB168, Maryland's Postconsumer Recycled Content Program bill which will stimulate the demand for materials to be recycled.

Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs. The states with a 10-cent deposit, such as Michigan and Oregon, have a 90% recycling rate. It would be fantastic if Maryland could say the same.

I live in a neighborhood of houses, townhomes, and garden apartments. The view from my home includes a stream that shortly leads to the Middle Patuxent River and, eventually, to the Chesapeake Bay. Litter washes up in this stream, mostly beverage containers and plastic bags. This bill would give the neighbors an incentive to keep the bottles out of the stream and land around the stream, keeping Maryland's waterways and neighborhoods cleaner.

For all of these reasons, we urge you to pass the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. It is long-overdue. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.**

Crystal Konny
Columbia, MD 21044

SB346_Deb Jung_Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Deb Jung

Position: FAV



Howard County Council

Deb Jung
Councilmember

District 4

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

February 18, 2025

SB 346
Deb Jung, Howard County Council
FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Members:

I strongly support SB 346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. I am grateful to the sponsoring Delegates for introducing this much needed bill for reducing litter and pollution in Maryland.

Far too many of the more than 5 billion single-use beverage containers sold annually in Maryland are not disposed of properly. This program establishes a convenient reimbursement process for customers to redeem their beverage containers. The incentive program targets at least a 90 percent redemption rate of beverage containers within a few years of implementation. Moreover, we know these programs are effective. Ten states have already adopted their own bottle deposit container program. In states with these programs, their beverage container recycling rates far exceed Maryland's.

As a Councilmember in Howard County, I am only too aware of the negative impact of littering in our community. Complaints about littered roadways and streams frequently fill my Council inbox. Although our County and State crews do their best to address this ongoing problem, if this bill passes, we can begin taking action to change behavior and implement effective waste prevention.

This is a commonsense solution for reducing our waste and creating a sustainable environment for all. I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 346.

Thank your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Jung". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "D" and "J".

Deb Jung
Councilmember District 4

Testimony SB346 EEE (DAC).pdf

Uploaded by: Debbie Cohn

Position: FAV

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB346 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 18, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in strong support of SB346. I have resided in Maryland since 1986, and most of my descendants reside in Maryland. Although I recall bottle deposits in supermarkets from childhood, I first experienced modern bottle deposit programs using reverse vending machines in Munich. They were easy to use and had an important added benefit for low income pensioners who would supplement their income by collecting plastic, metal and glass bottles discarded in parks and littering streets for easy redemption in neighborhood markets. Indeed, such a woman showed me how the process worked (and gave me a great way to practice my meager German and better understand the local culture.)

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction, also called the Maryland bottle bill, would be self-funded from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. It would be operated by an industry run non-profit beverage container stewardship organization and is generally based on the extended producer responsibility model that foster a circular and zero waste economy. Thus, the state or local jurisdiction do not pay for operation of the beverage container deposit program but reap the financial benefits of reduced recycling and litter clean-up costs.

Beverage container deposit programs are simple and they work. SB346 would create a beverage container deposit program requiring a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit, depending on the size of the container. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the bottle is returned. Ten states, covering more than 90 million people, have longstanding, successful programs. Results in those states demonstrate that these type of programs dramatically increase bottle returns, often up to a 90 percent return rate – a significant increase from Maryland’s 25 percent rate today.

SB346 includes three important improvements to prior iterations of a bottle deposit programs. It:

- Explicitly excludes cratons, pouches and aseptic packaging
- Authorizes the grant program for reuse/refill to finance an evaluation of the investments and policies needed to increase the share of reusable containers sold in Maryland by 2035
- Allows the Maryland Department of the Environment to add container types in the future as redemption technology and container materials change.

Beverage container deposit programs create multiple other benefits. They reduce waste by promoting the highest tiers – redesign, reduce, reuse, recycle – of the zero waste pyramid. They continue to build a circular, zero waste economy. They reduce plastic litter in our waterways, thereby reducing creation of

microplastics. And by increasing bottle recycling rates, they encourage businesses to create refillable and reusable containers and for businesses to provide bottle refill water dispensers.

For these reasons I support SB346 and urge a FAVORABLE report in Committee. Thank you.

SB 346

Uploaded by: Diana Conway

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**Senate Bill 346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter
Reduction Program**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment – February 18, 2025
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2025 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of budget neutral bill **SB 346**. This bill would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, and will achieve at least a 90% redemption rate, compared to the current average 25% recycling rate of containers.

Where do the rest of the containers end up currently? In our environment. Littered plastic beverage containers break down into small plastic particles -- microplastics and nanoplastics -- where they are ingested by wildlife, impact fish and our waterways, and move up the food chain to people. We are all concerned about our health and our children's health, as every month we see more and more research and news articles written on the health impacts of the plastic pollution in our environment.

We strongly support for **SB 346** since it is the best solution to resolve the plastic litter problem, it is budget neutral, and it will save money for local municipalities who currently spend their resources to clean up litter.

A recent [poll](#) found overwhelming public support for the Maryland Bottle Bill: 91% of registered voters would support a program with refundable deposit, funded by beverage producers, not taxpayers. Every year we wait, another four billion beverage containers enter our environment. We need to act now.

We ask for your support for SB 346 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Tazeen Ahmad
WDC President

Elisabeth Liisi Fidler
WDC Subcommittee on the
Environment

Diana Conway
WDC Advocacy Co-Chair

Bottle Bill Testimony Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Ryznar

Position: FAV



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB0346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 2/18 at 1:00 pm (Education, Energy, and the Environment)

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is a statewide evidence-based organization of over 900 physicians and other health professionals and supporters that addresses existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis, and the issues of pollution and toxic effects on health, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial and social justice.

Healthy Climate Maryland (HCM) is a state-wide coalition of dedicated public health and medical professionals that seeks to address climate change and environmental challenges by focusing on their impacts on public health.

CPSR and HCM strongly support SB0346, a bill establishing a beverage container deposit program in the State of Maryland at no added cost to the State (and with savings to waste management costs for local municipalities). By increasing recycling rates, this “Bottle Bill” will also yield public health benefits by reducing carbon emissions of new plastics production and decreasing environmental plastics.

Each year 2.6 billion plastic bottles litter Maryland’s roads, shores, and waterways or end up as landfill. These plastic bottles are made from fossil fuels and their production contributes to climate change. Due to exponential growth of plastics production, much of it in single-use plastics, the plastics industry accounts for a rising share of global carbon emissions (from 3.7% in 2015 to 5.3% in 2019).¹⁻³ If the plastic industry were a country, it would be the fifth most polluting country in the world. Most of the carbon emissions emerge from fossil fuel extraction and processing as well as from the production of the plastics building blocks (the hydrocarbon monomer and chemical additives).² One strategy of mitigating the climate impacts of plastics production is to increase plastics recycling in order to offset new plastic production.³ This proposed bottle bill will increase Maryland’s bottle recycling rate from 25% to over 90%.

Moreover, we know that these plastic bottles do not biodegrade. Instead, they break up into tiny fragments, called microplastics, which readily disperse in our air, water, and land, contributing to widespread environmental pollution.⁴ Once in the environment, they end up in our bodies through the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink.⁴ Studies have detected microplastics in most human organs tested, including the brain, heart, lungs, intestines, testicles, and placenta.⁴⁻⁶ Research shows that microplastics have negative health impacts. These health impacts emerge from the two components of plastics: the polymer building blocks, which come from fossil fuels, and the chemical additives.^{4,7} Recent animal studies show that microplastic

polymers cause inflammation in every tissue they end up in, disrupt the microbiome in the gut, and cause abnormal protein folding in the brain consistent with dementia.^{4,7-9} Decades of animal and human studies have identified plastics-related chemicals as endocrine-disruptors, implicating them in obesity, type 2 diabetes, preterm birth, decreased sperm count, early puberty in females, and neurodevelopmental conditions like ADHD, autism, and IQ loss.^{4,7,10-12} Health economists estimate the economic burden of these health issues to be substantial, costing the United States \$920.6 billion dollars in healthcare costs, disability, and premature death from just three plastics-related chemicals.⁴ Additionally, this past year, leading cancer researchers named microplastics and related chemicals as drivers of rising cancer rates in adults.¹³

Any bill that helps reduce the environmental burden of plastics is a net win for health of our Marylanders. We therefore urge you to vote in favor of the Bottle Bill.

Sincerely,

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Healthy Climate Maryland

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Letter from L4P re bottle bill (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Hollis Hoglund

Position: FAV



Laurel for the Patuxent strongly supports the Beverage Container and Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, HB 232 (or SB346). The purpose of our organization is to promote the health of our Patuxent River watershed through a variety of environmental projects which include establishing native plant gardens, planting trees, environmental education and art, invasive plant removal, and sponsoring litter cleanups, all in the city of Laurel.

While engaging in these activities and just in general driving throughout our state, we are all aware of the amount of litter along the roadsides, a substantial portion of which are beverage containers. That is because only about 23% of beverage containers sold in the state are collected for recycling. The rest are left in the environment, most of which will eventually enter the river, the Bay and eventually the ocean. We know that a bottle redemption program, which has already proven effective in ten US states and numerous countries around the world, would successfully address this issue. Without this bottle return program, nothing will be done and the litter will just continue to pollute our waterways.

In addition to litter reduction, this program has many other advantages as enumerated in the fact sheet which has been distributed. As written, it would be self-financing - taxpayer funding would not be necessary so it is a win-win solution.

We look forward to the passage of HB232 into law this legislative session so that it becomes an important part of the effort our state continues to make in creating a cleaner, healthier Maryland.

Jessica Coyle, President

Laurel for the Patuxent
329 Prince George St.
Laurel, MD 20707

JCR_SB0346_14Feb2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Janet Ruhl

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB0346/HB0232
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee 18 February 2025
Submitted on 14 February 2025 by 8:10 am

To the Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Janet Ruhl. I live in Galena, MD, on the Sassafras River, and I urge a **favorable** report on SB0346/HB0232. Thank you in advance for your consideration of support.

Single-use glass, plastic and metal beverage containers are often discarded as unsightly litter, buried in landfills or incinerated as garbage. These practices result in negative climate and health impacts at every stage – production of virgin materials, leaching toxic chemicals and breaking down into micro- and nano-plastics, extraction of fossil fuels, emission of greenhouse gases during degradation/incineration. The materials can be recycled, made into new containers, reducing the need for virgin materials. We must do more to reduce virgin glass, plastic and metal from being produced, used and discarded.

This bill requires that a small deposit is added to the price of beverages in glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers (10¢-15¢). The deposit is refunded when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling. The program is implemented and financed by beverage producers, w/ enforceable targets and strong oversight from MDE.

This Bill will:

- Provide Maryland consumers with incentives to return single-use glass, plastic and metal beverage containers instead of discarding these products in landfills or as roadside litter.
- Drive the market toward collecting, reusing and/or recycling glass, plastic and metal beverage containers.
- Reduce production of virgin glass, plastic and metal.

This Bill works alone but has even more impact when considered with other bills proposed in the Maryland Senate and House to provide mechanisms for reducing plastic bottle manufacturing and waste. The additional proposals - the Water Bottle Filling Stations Requirement (HB0277/SB0096), the Bill Allowing Reusable Beverage Containers in Sports Venues (HB0639), and the Post-consumer Plastic Recycled Content Program (HB0069) - will:

- Allow Maryland consumers to use refillable beverage bottles not only on a daily basis in buildings with water bottle filling stations but also at sports events.
- Allow Maryland consumers to reduce spending on single-use water bottles.
- Create reliable markets for post-consumer plastic.

I **support** Bill SB0346/HB0232 requiring Deposits on Beverage Containers for multiple reasons. I lead and have led roadside and river trash removal efforts for decades. Amongst the main trash items are bottles and cans, items which should be recycled. Putting a financial incentive into returning bottles and cans to central collection points will not only decrease roadside litter but emphasizes the need to recycle this huge resource.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give SB0346/HB0232 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,
Janet C. Ruhl

SB0346, FAV, FCG, OCE, JF, LS25.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Fitzwater

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

SB 346 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

DATE: February 18, 2025
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the Frederick County Executive, I urge the committee to give SB 346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program a favorable report.

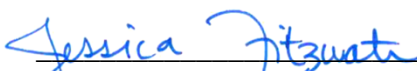
Each year across Maryland, 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold but only 23% of those plastic bottles are recycled while the remaining 4 billion containers are left in landfills, as litter, or are incinerated.

This bill will establish a deposit-refund system for metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers to reduce the burden of litter and trash on the environment and local governments. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. The program would rely on reverse vending machines and other technologies for convenient redemption to ensure as many bottles are recycled as possible, putting money back in the consumer's hands and increasing our recycling rates.

SB 346 is important to Frederick County as we strive to reduce litter and pollution especially in our waterways. As we invest in our future, this bill would encourage the investment in the development of refillable and reusable containers, while incentivizing consumers to recycle single use bottles. Our recycling rate would increase as more material enters the recycling process. This would also lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions due to less virgin material needed to create new containers.

Frederick County's Division of Solid Waste and Recycling has looked closely at this legislation and determined that our facility, which is an enterprise fund, would not be negatively impacted by this policy. While the program could affect commodity pricing for bottle materials, we anticipate savings in the transportation and processing of Frederick County's materials obtained from curbside collection. Ultimately, this program could improve the rates of recycling and provide a net benefit to our Division of Solid Waste and Recycling and the community at large.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 346. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD

SB346 AudubonMidAtlantic_BottleBill_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Jim Brown

Position: FAV



Maryland Office
2901 E. Baltimore St
Baltimore, MD 21224

Feb 14, 2025

To: Chair Feldman and members of the Maryland Senate Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment

From: Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Subject: Favorable Testimony for Maryland SB 346 Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (The Bottle Bill)

Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 346 (The Bottle Bill). Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

Science tells us birds are in decline. 1/3 of all Maryland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. The role that plastics pollution plays in their decline cannot be overlooked. Birds inadvertently feed on plastic (including bottles, and pieces of bottles) floating on the water, mistaking it for food. This leads to death and even the death of their young. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that for many bird species, plastic can be confused for food. NOAA asserts that from 1962-2012, nearly 60% of sea bird species had ingested plastic, and feed it to their young. Many organisms use plastic litter including bottles as shelter. This can further attract birds, as they graze on the surface of the sea or shorelines. Once ingested, plastics can block birds' throats and stomachs, create a false sense of being full, and even puncture their organs, eventually leading to illness, or death. Once plastics enter our ecosystems or food chains, all wildlife, and humans are exposed o microplastics.

In addition to the direct harm to birds and people, plastics pollution from bottle litter negatively impacts the water that humans and birds depend on, and when incinerated or broken down in landfills they make our air hazardous. These public health hazards present significant challenges, but they also negatively impact the quality of life for Maryland's residents and for wildlife as bottle litter accumulates "downstream" in our most vulnerable human communities. In Maryland's' natural environment, "downstream" also means our most sensitive ecological and cultural zones of coastlines, stream valleys and estuaries.

States with similar bottle refund and recycling policies have reduced beverage container litter by as much as 84%. Audubon believes this is an important bill to reduce the harmful effects that plastics pollution has on both birds and people. It will hold Maryland up as a leader in pollution reduction and improved public health.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of Senate Bill 346.

Thank You,

Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

QVM SB 0346 Testimony to Senate Education, Energy,

Uploaded by: John McKusick

Position: FAV

Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.

Submitted: 2/14/2025. Hearing Date: 2/18/2025.

In Support of SB0346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

My name is John McKusick and I reside in District 43. I retired from a career in student services at Towson University in 2017 after working for ten years at CCBC in addition to 20 years at Towson. I have been a volunteer for environmental causes for much of my adult life. This year I am part of the Climate & Environment advocacy team for Quaker Voice of Maryland and lead Quaker Voice advocacy to support the Maryland Bottle Bill.

As a regular volunteer with environmental organizations in Baltimore, like Blue Water Baltimore, I have worked on many stream cleanup projects where large quantities of plastic, metal, and glass are collected. It is a feel good job that delivers the satisfaction one anticipates from completing a useful community supporting activity. However, that good feeling doesn't last long as behaviors have not changed and the site quickly returns to a contaminated state.

This is why I love SB0346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. They are simple, straightforward, and easily understood in design and structure. The authors of the Maryland bill have established targets for improvement including a ninety percent redemption rate! To me, that means less plastic, metal, and glass I'm picking up in my neighborhood streams. How different many of our waterways will look and be as a result. And how much healthier these waterways will be.

Quaker Voice of Maryland, a small but growing advocacy group that is engaging Quakers and other people with similar interests across the state, is pleased to designate SB0232 as one of four pieces of environmental legislation for which we are advocating. We are committed to both pragmatic and spiritual approaches to "seeking a world renewed" and value community and dialogue as pathways to bringing people together to care for the earth. Quakers believe and try to embody the idea that there is that of God in each person. As a result, we are optimistic problem solvers. Collectively and working together, we can succeed and we must. A Maryland bottle bill would be a great way to care for our earth. We urge a favorable report for SB0346.

Sincerely,

John McKusick
Climate & Environment Team
Quaker Voice of Maryland
410-830-9225 john.ca.mckusick@verizon.net

bottle bill sb346.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: John Nader

Position: FAV

Bill: SB0346: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter
Reduction Program

Hearing Date: Feb 18, 2025

Bill Sponsor: Senators Brooks, Gile, M. Washington, Kagan, Ellis, Muse , Rosapepe,
Smith, Lewis Young, Hettleman, and Benson

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Submitting Organization: The Green Team of St John The Evangelist Roman Catholic Church

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB346. The Green Team at St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic (SJERC) Church in Columbia, Maryland, urges this committee to vote favorably on the "Bottle Bill." Our group's mission is to care for God's creation as instructed by Catholic social teaching. To that end, our activities include planting trees and gardens, educating ourselves and our communities about environmental issues, and engaging in advocacy. We are providing written testimony today in strong support of SB346, which would greatly reduce plastic and litter pollution that would protect our waterways and our Chesapeake Bay.

As you well know, Beverage container deposit programs are a proven and very effective method for reducing litter and recovering used containers. In other states that have instituted these programs, they have achieved recovery rates of nearly 90%. And if you are old enough to remember, we used to have beverage deposit programs in the 60s and 70s which worked quite well then. Now with new technology such as the reverse vending machines, the program will be easier and more effective.

This proposal has been around a bit and so the details on how this program would operate have been satisfactorily worked out to address earlier concerns. The program would:

- set a deposit level that will motivate the public to change behavior;
- have beverage producers take responsibility for financing and implementation with significant oversight from MD Department of Environment;
- promote development of reusable/refillable beverage container systems;
- would pay for itself, including the MDE oversight.

And the benefits are immense in reducing our beverage container litter and plastic pollution, increasing water quality, quadrupling our beverage recycling rates, reducing greenhouse gases, saving taxpayers and local governments money, and creating jobs.

So now is the time to pass this law and move forward on the protection of Maryland's environment and our people.

The Green Team of SJERC Church strongly supports SB346 and urges a FAVORABLE report in Committee.

SB346 Support with amendment - Maryland Beverage C

Uploaded by: Johntel Greene

Position: FAV



Prince George's County Municipal Association

An Association of 27 Municipalities



February 19, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chairman
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Position: Support with Amendment

Policy: Senate Bill 346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. The Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) writes on behalf of the 27 municipalities that collectively represent more than 955,000 residents, to share our strong support of Senate Bill 346.

The proposed legislation offers substantial benefits for our communities through its comprehensive approach to environmental stewardship and economic development. From an environmental perspective, the program would significantly reduce litter in our streets, parks, and waterways while increasing recycling rates across the state. This aligns Maryland with successful container deposit initiatives already implemented in neighboring states.

The economic advantages of this program are equally compelling. The legislation creates new revenue opportunities for participating municipalities through the establishment of redemption centers and development of local recycling infrastructure. The grant program embedded within the legislation will help ensure equitable access to these economic benefits across different communities.

With these benefits stated, we only have recommendations on amendments which would be to help clarify the location and method of the distribution centers. Maryland's neighboring states have clearly demonstrated the success of similar programs in achieving both environmental and economic objectives. The time has come for Maryland to join this regional effort.

Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) respectfully requests a favorable report for SB346 with the recommended amendments.

Sincerely,

Celina R. Benitez

Mayor Celina R. Benitez, President, Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA)

SB346-2025testimony-JonMerryman.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Merryman

Position: FAV

My name is Jon Merryman. I live in Catonsville and as some of you may already know, I'm very active in volunteerism when it comes to "other people's trash." Sometime later this year, I will have picked up over a million pieces of litter and over a million pounds of junk - tossed aside by uncaring individuals and businesses. I've also done roadside and river cleanups in over 550 US counties (which is over 1/6th of the country), including all 206 counties of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. So you could say I literally have plenty of STREET and STREAM cred related to this topic.

I'm that guy who's peering into storm drains, stepping over the guardrails and picking through ditches and gullies, hacking through thorn bushes and poison ivy, and wading into ponds, streams, and rivers to remove anything and everything that doesn't belong there. For areas that I clean regularly, for several years we were making decent progress. Trash from decades ago was getting cleaned up, and annual cleanups were often enough to maintain an area. But sometime around the peak of Covid, something happened. It's especially noticeable in the amount of trash people are tossing from vehicles, often in plain sight of others. Areas I used to clean up annually, or quarterly, are now completely trashed in as little as a month, or in some cases, just one week. Instead of sitting down at a restaurant, they're getting food to go. Instead of shopping at a store, they're shopping online. More truckers and delivery vehicles are on our nation's roads than ever, and the amount of trash this shift has generated has been staggering to me. With not enough time in their schedules, or not enough physical locations to take a break, they're parking randomly on the shoulder where no facilities are available, and our shared environment has become their personal trash can. And their business' repair shop. And their personal toilets. To make things worse, crews assigned to repair the damage they're doing are leaving trash of their own.

After taking all this in while seeing it happen in real time, I've come to some conclusions. While we can't eliminate or even punish bad behavior - because as we know, catching people in the act of littering, or even dumping large loads, is next to impossible -- we can and should do two things: First, minimize the damage done to the environment by changing the contents of the trash we find. We've started doing that. Foam product bans, and plastic bag bans are making a difference. I see it in the results of every trash bag I fill. But secondly, we need to start rewarding Good Behavior, and this is where the Deposit/Refund plan comes in. I've seen the difference it can make in two states where I've done cleanups in all their counties. In New Hampshire, which does NOT have a container deposit, it was relatively easy to fill a garbage bag with bottles and cans I found. But right next door in Vermont, which DOES have a container deposit, it took a LOT longer to fill a trash bag with the occasional wrappers and napkins scattered about.

We are at a crisis now, with studies showing that microplastics have found their way into our brains. But thankfully, this bill is a no-brainer. As other states have shown, it's a proven way to reduce litter, and the secondary and tertiary benefits are too numerous to mention in the limited time I have. Please take the time to also review my written testimony, where I have included several photos that will completely rock your world. And not in a good way. Thanks for listening.

Jon Merryman
jtmerryman@comcast.net
5 Magruder Avenue, Catonsville MD 21228
443-740-3590



Masonville Cove / Unnamed Tributary leading to Captain Trashwheel, Baltimore, Maryland 21226



Liberty Reservoir @ Nicodemus Road, Reisterstown. Maryland 21136



Beckley Street, Fort Holabird Park, Baltimore, Maryland 21224



Colgate Creek, Fort Holabird Park, Baltimore Maryland 21224



Plastic container cleanup @ Colgate Creek, Fort Holabird Park, Baltimore Maryland 21224



Hammonds Ferry Road, Patapsco Valley State Park, Halethorpe, Maryland 21227



I-95 Chesapeake House parking lot, Port Deposit, Maryland 21904



I-95 Maryland Welcome Center (Northbound), Laurel Maryland 20723



Makeshift truck rest area @ I-95/I-495 interchange (Paint Branch), College Park, Maryland 20740



Retention pond behind shopping center, Pocomoke City, Maryland 21851



Carroll Creek, Frederick, Maryland 21702

SB346_FAV_SignOn_TrashFreeMD_021825.pdf

Uploaded by: Kelly Doordan

Position: FAV



SB346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Date: February 18, 2025

Position: Support

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

We enthusiastically support SB346. This bill would set up a recycling refund program for beverage containers. The most effective recycling programs in the United States are in states where consumers can get a refund in exchange for returning their beverage container for recycling. SB346 will bring this program to Maryland.

Litter reduction (and the cost savings from avoided litter abatement) is a primary and unique benefit of deposit-return programs. A 2020 national litter study found states with recycling refund programs have 50% less litter than other states.¹

In states with recycling refunds, the recycling rate for plastic bottles is 63%. States without a recycling refund program recycle only 17% of their plastic bottles on average.²

Bottle bill states represent 28% of the population, 47% of glass bottles and jars recycled, 51% of aluminum cans recycled, and 62% of all PET bottles recycled nationally.³

¹ Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study <https://kab.org/litter-study>

² National Stewardship Action Foundation and Eunomia State of the States Report 2021

³ The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of Containers and Packaging Recycling Rates 2021

The ten US states with recycling refund programs produce cleaner material streams and supply more than 50% of glass cullet the glass container industry can use.⁴

Environmental benefits are maximized when well-designed beverage container recycling refunds are paired with extended producer responsibility for other packaging materials.⁵

That's how effective these programs are. This is a tried and true policy that will significantly reduce the estimated 40-60% of trash and litter composed of beverage containers in our streets, neighborhoods, and waterways.

By contrast, where we stand now has taxpayers funding significant costs associated with litter. Here are just a few small examples. According to MDOT, the SHA alone spends nearly \$8M annually to remove approximately 5,300 truckloads of litter. According to the agency "that's more than 27,000 truckloads and nearly \$40 million" every 5 years. Maryland local governments each fund litter cleanup programs. Trash Free Maryland knows of hundreds of cleanups across Maryland conducted by thousands of volunteers annually. There are thousands more conducted by residents in their communities. Perhaps the largest cost is that to our society. Health professionals tell us children who grow up in communities with litter are less likely to have successful outcomes. Littered plastic containers can break down in the environment into microplastics. Recent studies suggest levels of microplastics are increasing in human brains. Litter affects us all.

All of these costs are avoidable! There are better ways and this bill brings one of the most effective ways to reduce litter to Maryland.

We also note recycling refund programs for beverage containers can go hand in hand with legislation to adopt producer responsibility for packaging. Well designed producer responsibility programs can help us *reduce* our volume of waste, while modern recycling refund programs help us *reuse* and *recycle* a major portion of the packaging waste stream. Recycling refund programs help capture highly recyclable beverage containers that might otherwise be wasted or littered to satisfy high demand for high quality recycled materials.

Marylanders take great pride in our recycling efforts and are fed up with litter and concerned about health impacts from plastics in the environment. Modern recycling refund programs are proven policy winners that are effective, equitable, and supported by the general public. We look forward to working with you on this exciting and highly impactful policy. We respectfully urge your favorable consideration.

Contact: Kelly Doordan, Trash Free Maryland (kelly@trashfreemaryland.org)

Trash Free Maryland

Blue Water Baltimore

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

⁴ Glass Packaging Institute 2024

⁵ Eunomia: The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates 2023
<https://eunomia.eco/the-50-states-of-recycling-a-state-by-state-assessment-of-us-packaging-recycling-rates/>

Indivisible HoCoMD Environmental Action

Maryland Legislative Coalition – Climate Justice Wing

Friends of Quincy Run Watershed

Maryland Ornithological Society

Safe Skies Maryland

Vernal Pools

Surfrider Foundation

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Rock Creek Conservancy

Maryland League of Conservation Voters

National Aquarium

SB0346 Favorable Written Testimony - MEPPN2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Ken Phelps Jr

Position: FAV



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.

SB346_Green Towson Alliance_Hoffman_FAV.pdf.pdf

Uploaded by: Kirsten Hoffman

Position: FAV



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
701 West Joppa Road Towson, Maryland 21204

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

SB0346_LindaPardoe_Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Linda Pardoe

Position: FAV

SB0346_LindaPardoe_ Favorable

Feb 14, 2025

Position: Favorable

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Hearing date: 2/18/2025

My name is Linda Pardoe and I reside in District 13. I retired after a 30-year career in Information Technology. Since retiring, I have become more active in supporting the environment and became a Master Gardener in 2024.

I volunteer with the Master Gardeners to build and maintain a Pollinator Garden at Community Ecology Institute in Columbia. Pollinator gardens are not only decorative elements, but essential tools for environmental conservation and human well-being. Through the Master Gardeners Bay-Wise program, I also participate in small teams that visit homeowner's properties to educate them on how to control stormwater runoff, plant wisely, encourage wildlife and recycle yard waste.

I am particularly concerned about plastic containers. According to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, most of the plastic pollution that makes its way into the rivers of the Chesapeake Bay stays in and along local waters. About 94% of microplastics — particles measuring 5 millimeters or less in diameter — that feed into the system via its rivers stay in the system, with an additional 5% carried to the ocean and 1% remaining in the water column. Microplastics threaten the health of the biodiversity that lives within the Bay watershed, as well as the health of the residents that consume seafood.

This is why I support SB0346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. They are simple, straightforward, and understandable in design and structure. They improve the health of the environment and the plants, animals and humans who live here.

I am a Quaker, a member of Patapsco Friends Meeting in Ellicott City. Quakers believe in the testimony of stewardship. How we treat the Earth and its creatures is a basic part of our relationship with God. I learned about this bill from Quaker Voice of Maryland, a small but growing advocacy group that is engaging Quakers and other people with similar interests across the state. Quaker Voice has designated this bill as one of four pieces of environmental legislation to advocate for this year. We are committed to both pragmatic and spiritual approaches to "seeking a world renewed" and value community and dialogue as pathways to bringing people together to care for the earth.

Sincerely,

Linda Pardoe
6268 Cobbler Ct
Columbia, MD 21045

SB0346 Maryland Beverage Container SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsey Turnbull

Position: FAV

February 14, 2025

Senator Brooks
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
303 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB0346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Brooks and the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

As a resident and eco-friendly business owner in Montgomery County, Maryland, I, Lindsey Turnbull, am writing to ask for your support of SB0346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program would increase recycling programs and reduce litter and plastic pollution by incentivizing recycling, by placing a refundable deposit on beverage containers sold in the state. that can be returned when the bottle or can is returned. This bill creates a fund that will also support counties across the state to implement recycling plans, including electronics recycling, pain, newsprint, and phone books.

As the owner of a small business that focuses on reducing plastic usage and waste, it is incredibly disheartening to see plastic and other waste along our state's roads, in our parks, on our hiking trails, and in our communities. This litter is harmful to residents as well as wildlife. While Montgomery County has reliable recycling collection, it is simply not enough to encourage proper disposal of bottles and cans.

Research shows that bottle bills incentivize people to return bottles and cans they have used, as well as encourage people to pick up littered bottles and cans in their neighborhood. Similar bills have reduced container litter from 69% to 84%- meaning a cleaner, healthier Maryland. Additionally, increasing recycled content in bottles over creating new plastics via implementing a deposit program is the equivalent of saving the energy needed to power 8,600 homes annually, according to the Container Recycling Institute. Furthermore, bottle bills create jobs for those who collect, sort, and transport containers for recycling, adding to our state's economy and spending power.

Overall, I believe the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program will add jobs to the state while increasing our recycling rate, making the state more beautiful and more economically prosperous.

I urge a favorable report on SB0346.

Sincerely,
Lindsey Turnbull
Owner, From Here to Home Essentials

SB 346 - National Aquarium - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Maggie Ostdahl

Position: FAV



Date: February 18, 2025

Bill: SB 346– Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for SB 346. If enacted, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program would increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers, reduce litter and pollution, and lower waste management costs.

Reducing litter from beverage containers across Maryland is related to all the National Aquarium’s strategic conservation goals: combatting climate change, saving wildlife and habitats, and stopping plastic pollution. Most 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 beverage containers, more than half of which are plastic, are sold every year¹, yet only about a quarter of these containers are recycled. The rest end up in landfills, are incinerated or become litter in our environment. Over time, plastic containers break down into smaller pieces that endanger wildlife, contaminate the global food web, and transport toxins harmful to human health.

The National Aquarium is committed to holistic, solutions-focused approaches to reducing plastic pollution, which includes implementing various plastic reduction and waste diversion measures throughout our operations. As part of this commitment, the National Aquarium has eliminated all single-use plastics from our cafes, including plastic beverage containers. The National Aquarium has worked with thousands of dedicated volunteers to remove over 35,000 plastic beverage containers from the environment during the last four years alone. As just one of the many organizations in Maryland that conduct regular debris cleanups, this figure only underscores the need for a change in approach that includes passing the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The U.S. remains one of the world’s top generators of new plastic production and plastic waste. The plastic pollution crisis is well-documented around the world, with the global cost of waste management and litter cleanup activities totaling approximately \$47 billion each year². Closer to home, the state funds several grant programs to support litter removal, and the Maryland Department of Transportation estimates spending approximately \$8 million annually to remove truckloads of litter, including beverage containers, from roadways. Marylanders’ time and capacity as well as millions of dollars could be better allocated by reducing how many beverage containers become litter and this legislation offers a proven source reduction policy solution.

Action by the state of Maryland is long overdue. Refundable bottle deposit programs currently operate in ten other U.S. states and have been shown to be highly effective policies that recover beverage containers and increase recycling rates while reducing litter and associated costs of

¹ [Container Recycling Institute](#), Beverage Market Analysis

² [World Wide Fund for Nature 2022. Plastics: the costs to society, the environment and the economy.](#)

mitigation. Enacting a beverage container deposit return system in our state is a critical and cost-effective step towards a cleaner and healthier future for Maryland.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 346.

Contact:

Ryan Fredriksson

Vice President, Government Affairs

410-385-8276

rfredriksson@aqua.org

Maggie Ostdahl

Sr. Conservation Policy Manager

410-385-8275

mostdahl@aqua.org

Gonzales Report - Sierra Club Beverage Container R

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV



MARYLAND POLL

January 2025

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Background and Methodology

Patrick E. Gonzales graduated magna cum laude from the University of Baltimore with a degree in political science.

His career in the field of public opinion research began in the mid-1980s as an analyst with *Mason-Dixon Opinion Research*. During this time, Mr. Gonzales helped develop, craft and implement election surveys and exit polls for television and radio in the Baltimore-Washington D.C. metro area.

Mr. Gonzales has polled and analyzed thousands of elections in Maryland and across the country over the past forty years. Further, he and his associates have conducted numerous market research projects, crafting message development plans and generating strategy blueprints for businesses and organizations throughout the state.

Over his decades of conducting public opinion polls, Patrick Gonzales has been widely recognized by his peers for his ability to conduct unbiased surveys, and analyze the results in an impartial, evenhanded manner.

Mr. Gonzales appears frequently on radio and television in the Baltimore-D.C. region as a guest commentator.

This poll was conducted by ***Gonzales Research & Media Services, Inc.*** from December 27th, 2024 through January 4th, 2025. A total of 811 registered voters in Maryland, who indicated they are likely to vote in the next election, were queried by live telephone interviews, utilizing both landline and cell phone numbers. A cross-section of interviews was conducted throughout the state, reflecting general election voting patterns.

The margin of error (MOE), per accepted statistical standards, is a range of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. If the entire population was surveyed, there is a 95% probability that the true numbers would fall within this range.

Gonzales Maryland Poll – January 2025 Beverage Container Results

Environmental Impact, Container Litter and Pollution – Level of Concern

About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only a quarter of them are recycled. Because of this, four billion containers are left in the environment annually. We asked voters, based on this, how concerned they are about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution.

Statewide, a majority 54% are very concerned about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution, 40% are somewhat concerned, and only 5% are not concerned.

Sixty-seven percent of Democrats, 61% of African Americans, and 74% of voters in Baltimore City are very concerned about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution.

Litter and Pollution	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>
Statewide	54%	40%
Democrat	67%	29%
Republican	37%	55%
Independent	42%	48%
White	51%	42%
African American	61%	34%
Other	51%	48%
Women	60%	35%
Men	47%	46%
18-34	53%	39%
35-49	48%	46%
50-64	54%	38%
65 and older	58%	36%
Rural Maryland	47%	45%
Baltimore City	74%	23%
Baltimore Suburbs	48%	44%
Washington Suburbs	58%	37%

Health Impact, Plastic Beverage Containers – Level of Concern

Littered beverage containers, most of them plastic, wash into Maryland's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay every year. Plastic bottles break into ever smaller particles over time and are consumed by wildlife and people. Plastic particles have been found in virtually every human organ.

Based on this, we asked Marylanders how concerned they are about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution in Maryland.

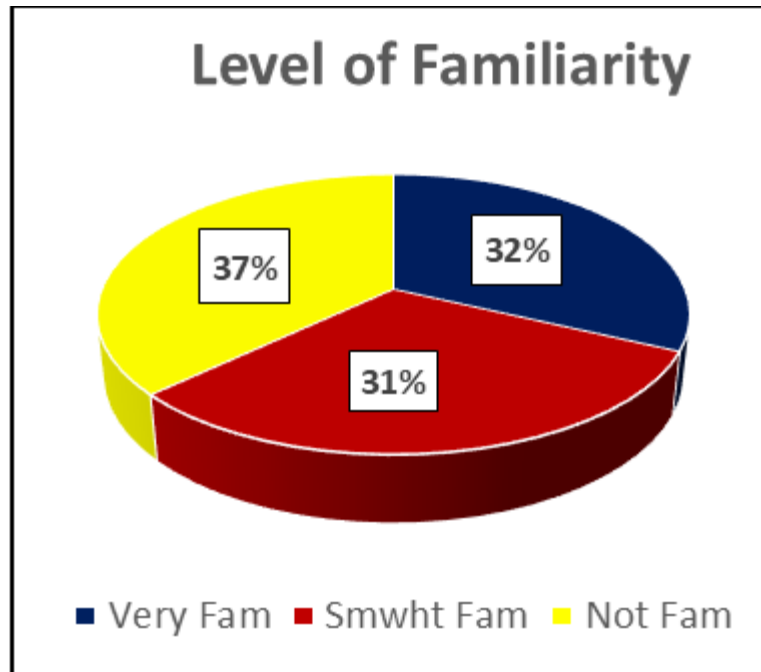
Statewide, a substantial 63% are very concerned about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution in Maryland, 32% are somewhat concerned, and a scant 4% are not concerned.

Seventy-four percent of Democrats, 71% of African Americans, and 72% of voters residing in the Washington Suburbs are very concerned about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution.

Plastic Beverage Containers	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>
Statewide	63%	32%
Democrat	74%	21%
Republican	39%	54%
Independent	64%	32%
White	58%	38%
African American	71%	24%
Other	64%	29%
Women	69%	27%
Men	55%	39%
18-34	63%	32%
35-49	64%	33%
50-64	61%	34%
65 and older	63%	31%
Rural Maryland	51%	43%
Baltimore City	71%	26%
Baltimore Suburbs	56%	38%
Washington Suburbs	72%	24%

Beverage Container Redemption Program – Level of Familiarity

Among Maryland voters, 32% are very familiar with beverage container redemption programs, where consumers pay a small, 5-10 cent deposit per container when purchasing a beverage, 31% are somewhat familiar with beverage container redemption programs, and 37% are not familiar.



Level of Familiarity	<u>Very Fam</u>	<u>Smwht Fam</u>	<u>Not Fam</u>
Statewide	32%	31%	37%
Democrat	35%	27%	37%
Republican	28%	37%	34%
Independent	30%	31%	38%
White	31%	35%	33%
African American	29%	20%	49%
Other	42%	34%	23%
Women	35%	30%	34%
Men	29%	31%	39%

Beverage Container Redemption Program – Level of Support

We told voters that state legislators are considering a beverage container redemption program to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, which would place a 10-cent refundable deposit on the sale of beverages in plastic, metal, or glass containers. The deposit would be refunded when the empty containers are returned for recycling, and the program would be financed by beverage companies, not taxpayers.

We then asked if they would support or oppose a beverage container redemption program to reduce litter and plastic pollution in Maryland?

Statewide, an overwhelming 89% say they would support such a program to reduce litter and plastic pollution in Maryland (70% “strongly” support and 19% “somewhat” support), while a mere 8% would oppose a beverage container redemption program, with 3% giving no answer.

Beverage Container Redemption	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Statewide	89%	8%
Democrat	92%	5%
Republican	89%	7%
Independent	81%	18%
White	87%	9%
African American	96%	4%
Other	80%	18%
Women	90%	7%
Men	87%	10%
18-34	90%	6%
35-49	85%	11%
50-64	89%	9%
65 and older	91%	7%
Rural Maryland	87%	10%
Baltimore City	95%	3%
Baltimore Suburbs	87%	11%
Washington Suburbs	90%	6%

Positive Impacts From Program – Effect on Support

We explained to respondents that the program would capture 90% of used beverage containers for recycling and remove 3.6 billion cans and bottles from the environment annually, and told them it would reduce litter and greenhouse gas emissions, create new recycling jobs, and save money for local governments.

We then asked if these impacts made them more likely or less likely to support a Maryland beverage container redemption program, or if they made no difference to them.

Among voters, support was sky high already for a beverage container redemption program. Statewide, 65% say these impacts make them more likely to support a beverage container redemption program (39% “much” more likely and 26% “somewhat” more likely), an infinitesimal 2% say the impacts make them less likely, and 33% say the impacts make no difference to them.

Beverage Container Redemption Program – Informed Support

After they had heard a little more about beverage container litter, the plastic pollution problem, and the proposed program, 91% of voters say they support a beverage container redemption program in Maryland, and 8% oppose such a program.

Redemption Program - Informed	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Statewide	91%	8%
Democrat	93%	5%
Republican	92%	6%
Independent	81%	17%
White	89%	9%
African American	96%	4%
Other	84%	15%
Women	91%	8%
Men	90%	8%

Appendix A: Data Tables

QUESTION: 5.5 Billion Beverage Container Impact – Level of Concern *About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only a quarter of them are recycled. More than four billion containers are left in the environment – in landfills or as litter - or incinerated. Beverage containers are a major share of litter captured by trash traps on the Anacostia River and in Baltimore Harbor*

How concerned are you about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution: very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned?

<u>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very concerned	435	53.6 %
Somewhat concerned	324	40.0 %
Not concerned	40	4.9 %
<u>No answer</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1.5 %</u>
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

<u>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RESULTS

Statewide	435 53.6%	324 40.0%	40 4.9%	12 1.5%
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N=811

<u>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	287 66.6%	125 29.0%	11 2.6%	8 1.9%
Republican	83 37.1%	124 55.4%	17 7.6%	0 0.0%
Unaffiliated	65 41.7%	75 48.1%	12 7.7%	4 2.6%

N=811

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER

Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
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RACE/ETHNICITY

White	241 50.6%	202 42.4%	27 5.7%	6 1.3%
African American	148 60.7%	82 33.6%	9 3.7%	5 2.0%
Other/No answer	46 50.5%	40 44.0%	4 4.4%	1 1.1%

N=811

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER

Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
----------------	--------------------	---------------	-----------

GENDER

Female	260 59.5%	154 35.2%	17 3.9%	6 1.4%
Male	175 46.8%	170 45.5%	23 6.1%	6 1.6%

N=811

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER

Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
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AGE

18 to 34	77 53.1%	57 39.3%	8 5.5%	3 2.1%
35 to 49	95 47.7%	92 46.2%	8 4.0%	4 2.0%
50 to 64	130 54.4%	92 38.5%	13 5.4%	4 1.7%
65 and older	133 58.3%	83 36.4%	11 4.8%	1 0.4%

N=811

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER

	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>REGION</u>				
Rural Maryland	59 46.8%	57 45.2%	7 5.6%	3 2.4%
Baltimore City	46 74.2%	14 22.6%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	154 48.4%	140 44.0%	19 6.0%	5 1.6%
Washington Suburbs	176 57.7%	113 37.0%	13 4.3%	3 1.0%

QUESTION: Littered Beverage Container Impact – Level of Concern *Littered beverage containers, most of them plastic, wash into Maryland's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Plastic bottles break into ever smaller particles over time and are ingested by wildlife and people. Plastic particles have been found in virtually every human organ. How concerned are you about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution in Maryland: very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned?*

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very concerned	507	62.5 %
Somewhat concerned	263	32.4 %
Not concerned	34	4.2 %
No answer	7	0.9 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RESULTS

Statewide	507 62.5%	263 32.4%	34 4.2%	7 0.9%
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N=811

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	319 74.0%	91 21.1%	18 4.2%	3 0.7%
Republican	88 39.3%	122 54.5%	11 4.9%	3 1.3%
Unaffiliated	100 64.1%	50 32.1%	5 3.2%	1 0.6%

N=811

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	277 58.2%	179 37.6%	16 3.4%	4 0.8%
African American	172 70.5%	58 23.8%	12 4.9%	2 0.8%
Other/No answer	58 63.7%	26 28.6%	6 6.6%	1 1.1%

N=811

HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER

Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
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GENDER

Female	300 68.6%	119 27.2%	15 3.4%	3 0.7%
Male	207 55.3%	144 38.5%	19 5.1%	4 1.1%

N=811

HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER

Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
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AGE

18 to 34	91 62.8%	46 31.7%	6 4.1%	2 1.4%
35 to 49	127 63.8%	65 32.7%	7 3.5%	0 0.0%
50 to 64	145 60.7%	82 34.3%	10 4.2%	2 0.8%
65 and older	144 63.2%	70 30.7%	11 4.8%	3 1.3%

N=811

HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER

Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
----------------	--------------------	---------------	-----------

REGION

Rural Maryland	64 50.8%	54 42.9%	6 4.8%	2 1.6%
Baltimore City	44 71.0%	16 25.8%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	179 56.3%	120 37.7%	17 5.3%	2 0.6%
Washington Suburbs	220 72.1%	73 23.9%	10 3.3%	2 0.7%

QUESTION: Beverage Container Redemption – Level of Familiarity *Some states have a beverage container redemption program, where consumers pay a small, 5-10 cent deposit per container when purchasing a beverage. The deposit is refunded when the containers are returned to a retailer or redemption center for recycling. These programs are highly effective in reducing beverage container litter and waste.*

How familiar would you say you are with beverage container redemption programs: very familiar, somewhat familiar, or not familiar?

PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY	Number	Percent
Very familiar	258	31.8 %
Somewhat familiar	248	30.6 %
Not familiar	296	36.5 %
No answer	9	1.1 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY			
Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	258 31.8%	248 30.6%	296 36.5%	9 1.1%
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N=811

PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY			
Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	150 34.8%	117 27.1%	159 36.9%	5 1.2%
Republican	62 27.7%	83 37.1%	77 34.4%	2 0.9%
Unaffiliated	46 29.5%	48 30.8%	60 38.5%	2 1.3%

N=811

PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY			
Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	149 31.3%	168 35.3%	155 32.6%	4 0.8%
African American	71 29.1%	49 20.1%	120 49.2%	4 1.6%
Other/No answer	38 41.8%	31 34.1%	21 23.1%	1 1.1%

N=811

PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>				
Female	151 34.6%	132 30.2%	149 34.1%	5 1.1%
Male	107 28.6%	116 31.0%	147 39.3%	4 1.1%

N=811

PROGRAMS – LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer
<u>AGE</u>				
18 to 34	42 29.0%	48 33.1%	54 37.2%	1 0.7%
35 to 49	53 26.6%	69 34.7%	75 37.7%	2 1.0%
50 to 64	81 33.9%	73 30.5%	82 34.3%	3 1.3%
65 and older	82 36.0%	58 25.4%	85 37.3%	3 1.3%

N=811

PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer
<u>REGION</u>				
Rural Maryland	36 28.6%	43 34.1%	46 36.5%	1 0.8%
Baltimore City	19 30.6%	12 19.4%	30 48.4%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	104 32.7%	101 31.8%	109 34.3%	4 1.3%
Washington Suburbs	99 32.5%	92 30.2%	111 36.4%	3 1.0%

QUESTION: Beverage Container Redemption Program *Maryland legislators are considering a beverage container redemption program to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would place a 10-cent refundable deposit on the sale of beverages in plastic, metal, or glass containers. The deposit would be refunded when the empty containers are returned for recycling. The program would be financed by beverage companies, not taxpayers.*

Would you personally support or oppose a beverage container redemption program to reduce litter and plastic pollution in Maryland?

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM	Number	Percent
Support	721	88.9 %
Oppose	67	8.3 %
No answer	23	2.8 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	721 88.9%	67 8.3%	23 2.8%
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N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
Support	Oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	395 91.6%	23 5.3%	13 3.0%
Republican	200 89.3%	16 7.1%	8 3.6%
Unaffiliated	126 80.8%	28 17.9%	2 1.3%

N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	415 87.2%	41 8.6%	20 4.2%
African American	233 95.5%	10 4.1%	1 0.4%
Other/No answer	73 80.2%	16 17.6%	2 2.2%

N=811	BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>			
Female	395 90.4%	30 6.9%	12 2.7%
Male	326 87.2%	37 9.9%	11 2.9%

N=811	BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>AGE</u>			
18 to 34	131 90.3%	9 6.2%	5 3.4%
35 to 49	170 85.4%	22 11.1%	7 3.5%
50 to 64	212 88.7%	21 8.8%	6 2.5%
65 and older	208 91.2%	15 6.6%	5 2.2%


N=811	BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>REGION</u>			
Rural Maryland	109 86.5%	13 10.3%	4 3.2%
Baltimore City	59 95.2%	2 3.2%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	278 87.4%	34 10.7%	6 1.9%
Washington Suburbs	275 90.2%	18 5.9%	12 3.9%

Program Support **by** Program Familiarity

N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAMSupportOpposeNo answerPROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY

Very familiar	232 89.9%	20 7.8%	6 2.3%
Somewhat familiar	218 87.9%	23 9.3%	7 2.8%
Not familiar	265 89.5%	21 7.1%	10 3.4%
No answer	6 66.7%	3 33.3%	0 0.0%



No matter the level of familiarity with the redemption program among Marylanders, support for the program is off the chart

INTENSITY - Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY	Number	Percent
Strongly support	568	70.0 %
Somewhat support	153	18.9 %
Somewhat oppose	46	5.7 %
Strongly oppose	21	2.6 %
No answer	23	2.8 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	568 70.0%	153 18.9%	46 5.7%	21 2.6%	23 2.8%
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N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	329 76.3%	66 15.3%	14 3.2%	9 2.1%	13 3.0%
Republican	145 64.7%	55 24.6%	13 5.8%	3 1.3%	8 3.6%
Unaffiliated	94 60.3%	32 20.5%	19 12.2%	9 5.8%	2 1.3%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	316 66.4%	99 20.8%	30 6.3%	11 2.3%	20 4.2%
African American	197 80.7%	36 14.8%	6 2.5%	4 1.6%	1 0.4%
Other/No answer	55 60.4%	18 19.8%	10 11.0%	6 6.6%	2 2.2%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY

Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
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GENDER

Female	324 74.1%	71 16.2%	21 4.8%	9 2.1%	12 2.7%
Male	244 65.2%	82 21.9%	25 6.7%	12 3.2%	11 2.9%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY

Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
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AGE

18 to 34	97 66.9%	34 23.4%	6 4.1%	3 2.1%	5 3.4%
35 to 49	135 67.8%	35 17.6%	16 8.0%	6 3.0%	7 3.5%
50 to 64	163 68.2%	49 20.5%	16 6.7%	5 2.1%	6 2.5%
65 and older	173 75.9%	35 15.4%	8 3.5%	7 3.1%	5 2.2%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY

Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
------------------	------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------

REGION

Rural Maryland	82 65.1%	27 21.4%	8 6.3%	5 4.0%	4 3.2%
Baltimore City	50 80.6%	9 14.5%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	214 67.3%	64 20.1%	26 8.2%	8 2.5%	6 1.9%
Washington Suburbs	222 72.8%	53 17.4%	11 3.6%	7 2.3%	12 3.9%

QUESTION: Reduce Litter, Save Money - Impact On Support *The Maryland program would capture 90% of used beverage containers for recycling and remove 3.6 billion cans and bottles from the environment annually, most of which are plastic bottles. It would reduce litter and greenhouse gas emissions, create new recycling jobs, and save money for local governments.*

Do these impacts make you more likely or less likely to support a Maryland beverage container redemption program, or do they make no difference to you?

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT	Number	Percent
More likely	528	65.1 %
Less likely	19	2.3 %
No Effect	264	32.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
More likely	Less likely	No Effect

RESULTS

Statewide	528 65.1%	19 2.3%	264 32.6%
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N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
More likely	Less likely	No Effect

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	304 70.5%	8 1.9%	119 27.6%
Republican	118 52.7%	3 1.3%	103 46.0%
Unaffiliated	106 67.9%	8 5.1%	42 26.9%

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
More likely	Less likely	No Effect

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	302 63.4%	13 2.7%	161 33.8%
African American	169 69.3%	3 1.2%	72 29.5%
Other/No answer	57 62.6%	3 3.3%	31 34.1%

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT

More likely	Less likely	No Effect
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GENDER

Female	264 60.4%	12 2.7%	161 36.8%
Male	264 70.6%	7 1.9%	103 27.5%

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT

More likely	Less likely	No Effect
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AGE

18 to 34	99 68.3%	5 3.4%	41 28.3%
35 to 49	136 68.3%	4 2.0%	59 29.6%
50 to 64	151 63.2%	6 2.5%	82 34.3%
65 and older	142 62.3%	4 1.8%	82 36.0%

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT

More likely	Less likely	No Effect
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REGION


Rural Maryland	64 50.8%	5 4.0%	57 45.2%
Baltimore City	46 74.2%	1 1.6%	15 24.2%
Baltimore Suburbs	206 64.8%	7 2.2%	105 33.0%
Washington Suburbs	212 69.5%	6 2.0%	87 28.5%

Effect on Support **by** Plastic Litter Health Impacts

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORTMore likelyLess likelyNo EffectHEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER

Very concerned	363 71.6%	6 1.2%	138 27.2%
Somewhat concerned	144 54.8%	11 4.2%	108 41.1%
Not concerned	16 47.1%	0 0.0%	18 52.9%
No answer	5 71.4%	2 28.6%	0 0.0%



The greater the level of concern over the health impacts of plastic litter, the greater the positive impacts of a redemption program effect support

INTENSITY - Is that much or somewhat more likely/ less likely?

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY	Number	Percent
Much more likely	315	38.8 %
Somewhat more likely	213	26.3 %
Somewhat less likely	11	1.4 %
Much less likely	8	1.0 %
No Effect	264	32.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect

RESULTS

Statewide	315 38.8%	213 26.3%	11 1.4%	8 1.0%	264 32.6%
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N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	174 40.4%	130 30.2%	6 1.4%	2 0.5%	119 27.6%
Republican	79 35.3%	39 17.4%	3 1.3%	0 0.0%	103 46.0%
Unaffiliated	62 39.7%	44 28.2%	2 1.3%	6 3.8%	42 26.9%

N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	186 39.1%	116 24.4%	8 1.7%	5 1.1%	161 33.8%
African American	98 40.2%	71 29.1%	3 1.2%	0 0.0%	72 29.5%
Other/No answer	31 34.1%	26 28.6%	0 0.0%	3 3.3%	31 34.1%

N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY

Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect
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GENDER

Female	142 32.5%	122 27.9%	8 1.8%	4 0.9%	161 36.8%
Male	173 46.3%	91 24.3%	3 0.8%	4 1.1%	103 27.5%

N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY

Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect
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AGE

18 to 34	57 39.3%	42 29.0%	4 2.8%	1 0.7%	41 28.3%
35 to 49	81 40.7%	55 27.6%	3 1.5%	1 0.5%	59 29.6%
50 to 64	93 38.9%	58 24.3%	1 0.4%	5 2.1%	82 34.3%
65 and older	84 36.8%	58 25.4%	3 1.3%	1 0.4%	82 36.0%

N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY

Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect
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REGION

Rural Maryland	35 27.8%	29 23.0%	3 2.4%	2 1.6%	57 45.2%
Baltimore City	27 43.5%	19 30.6%	1 1.6%	0 0.0%	15 24.2%
Baltimore Suburbs	137 43.1%	69 21.7%	3 0.9%	4 1.3%	105 33.0%
Washington Suburbs	116 38.0%	96 31.5%	4 1.3%	2 0.7%	87 28.5%

QUESTION: Beverage Container Redemption Program - Informed *Now that you have heard a little more about beverage container litter, the plastic pollution problem, and the proposed program, would you say you support or oppose a beverage container redemption program in Maryland?*

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED	Number	Percent
Support	734	90.5 %
Oppose	64	7.9 %
No answer	13	1.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	734 90.5%	64 7.9%	13 1.6%
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N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED		
Support	Oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	401 93.0%	23 5.3%	7 1.6%
Republican	206 92.0%	14 6.3%	4 1.8%
Unaffiliated	127 81.4%	27 17.3%	2 1.3%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	423 88.9%	41 8.6%	12 2.5%
African American	235 96.3%	9 3.7%	0 0.0%
Other/No answer	76 83.5%	14 15.4%	1 1.1%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED

Support	Oppose	No answer
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GENDER

Female	396 90.6%	34 7.8%	7 1.6%
Male	338 90.4%	30 8.0%	6 1.6%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED

Support	Oppose	No answer
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AGE

18 to 34	132 91.0%	9 6.2%	4 2.8%
35 to 49	175 87.9%	19 9.5%	5 2.5%
50 to 64	215 90.0%	23 9.6%	1 0.4%
65 and older	212 93.0%	13 5.7%	3 1.3%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED

Support	Oppose	No answer
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REGION

Rural Maryland	111 88.1%	14 11.1%	1 0.8%
Baltimore City	59 95.2%	2 3.2%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	284 89.3%	31 9.7%	3 0.9%
Washington Suburbs	280 91.8%	17 5.6%	8 2.6%

Program Support - Informed **by** Initial Program Support


N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED

	Support	Oppose	No answer
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BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM

Support	712 98.8%	9 1.2%	0 0.0%
Oppose	15 22.4%	52 77.6%	0 0.0%
No answer	7 30.4%	3 13.0%	13 56.5%



22% of those who initially oppose the redemption program support it after being informed of its benefits

INTENSITY - Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

INFORMED - INTENSITY	Number	Percent
Strongly support	513	63.3 %
Somewhat support	221	27.3 %
Somewhat oppose	42	5.2 %
Strongly oppose	22	2.7 %
No answer	13	1.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	513 63.3%	221 27.3%	42 5.2%	22 2.7%	13 1.6%
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N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	312 72.4%	89 20.6%	13 3.0%	10 2.3%	7 1.6%
Republican	122 54.5%	84 37.5%	12 5.4%	2 0.9%	4 1.8%
Unaffiliated	79 50.6%	48 30.8%	17 10.9%	10 6.4%	2 1.3%

N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	292 61.3%	131 27.5%	28 5.9%	13 2.7%	12 2.5%
African American	175 71.7%	60 24.6%	5 2.0%	4 1.6%	0 0.0%
Other/No answer	46 50.5%	30 33.0%	9 9.9%	5 5.5%	1 1.1%

N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY

Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
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GENDER

Female	273 62.5%	123 28.1%	23 5.3%	11 2.5%	7 1.6%
Male	240 64.2%	98 26.2%	19 5.1%	11 2.9%	6 1.6%

N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY

Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
------------------	------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------

AGE

18 to 34	94 64.8%	38 26.2%	7 4.8%	2 1.4%	4 2.8%
35 to 49	122 61.3%	53 26.6%	13 6.5%	6 3.0%	5 2.5%
50 to 64	143 59.8%	72 30.1%	15 6.3%	8 3.3%	1 0.4%
65 and older	154 67.5%	58 25.4%	7 3.1%	6 2.6%	3 1.3%

N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY

Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
------------------	------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------

REGION

Rural Maryland	77 61.1%	34 27.0%	11 8.7%	3 2.4%	1 0.8%
Baltimore City	45 72.6%	14 22.6%	0 0.0%	2 3.2%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	197 61.9%	87 27.4%	21 6.6%	10 3.1%	3 0.9%
Washington Suburbs	194 63.6%	86 28.2%	10 3.3%	7 2.3%	8 2.6%

Appendix B: Maryland Poll Sample Demographics

<u>AGE</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18 to 34	145	17.9 %
35 to 49	199	24.5 %
50 to 64	239	29.5 %
65 and older	228	28.1 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>PARTY REGISTRATION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Democrat	431	53.1 %
Republican	224	27.6 %
Unaffiliated	156	19.2 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>RACE/ETHNICITY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	476	58.7 %
African American	244	30.1 %
Other/No answer	91	11.2 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>GENDER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Female	437	53.9 %
Male	374	46.1 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>REGION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Rural Maryland	126	15.5 %
Baltimore City	62	7.6 %
Baltimore Suburbs	318	39.2 %
Washington Suburbs	305	37.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

Regional Groupings

Rural Maryland – includes Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Baltimore City – includes Baltimore City.

Baltimore Suburbs – includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties.

Washington Suburbs – includes Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties.

SB 346_MDSierraClub_fav 18Feb2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV



SIERRA CLUB

MARYLAND CHAPTER

P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB 346 – “Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 18, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB 346. The primary objective of this bill is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution in Maryland. It would create a beverage container deposit program with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers. The deposit would be refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. By attaching value to empty beverage containers, fewer are littered and those that are littered do not remain in the environment. These programs have been highly effective in the U.S. and around the world for reducing beverage container litter and diverting containers from disposal. They also produce a number of other important benefits, highlighted below.

The problem

Beverage container litter in Maryland is pervasive and growing, and is a major source of plastic pollution, posing threats to the environment and human health. About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only about a quarter are recycled.¹ Four billion containers annually are wasted – left in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways, or incinerated. More than half of these wasted containers are plastic. Beverage containers, most of them plastic, account most of the trash in trash traps on the Anacostia River watershed (Exhibit 1).²

Maryland’s beverage container litter problem is so severe that the Environmental Protection Agency declared the Anacostia watershed to be impaired with trash in 2010, and made the same determination in 2014 for the watershed surrounding Baltimore Harbor. Our state, home to the largest estuary in the country – the Chesapeake Bay – also has the dubious distinction of having two of the three water bodies in the country that are impaired for trash and regulated by the EPA under the Clean Water Act.

Plastic pollution from beverage containers poses a threat to wildlife and human health. The containers break into ever smaller pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Plastic particles have been found in the food we eat, the air we breathe, and in most human organs. Scientists estimate that we are ingesting up to a credit card’s worth of plastic weekly.³ The impact of plastic ingestion on human health is of great concern.

The solution

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs.⁴ Beverage container litter in those states was reduced by 70-84%.⁵ A study of coastal litter in debris surveys in Australian and U.S. states with and without container deposit legislation found that

¹ Container Recycling Institute (CRI). “2024 Beverage Market Data Analysis (BMDA)” for Maryland, based on 2021 data.

² Anacostia Watershed Society, Anacostia Riverkeeper.

³ Dahlberg and University of Newcastle, Australia. 2019. *No Plastic in Nature: Assessing Plastic Ingestion from Nature to People*. Commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund.

⁴ California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Vermont.

⁵ Reloop and CRI. 2021. *Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Reduce Litter*. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/DRS-Litter-Fact-Sheet-Summary-14June2021.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.

the share of containers in states with container deposit legislation was 40% lower than in states without the laws.⁶ A 2011 University of Maryland analysis of the impact of a potential beverage container deposit system in Maryland concluded “there is little evidence that any other program, in and of itself, is nearly as effective as deposit programs at reducing litter rates.”⁷

Refundable deposits both reduce litter and greatly increase recycling rates for beverage containers covered by these programs. Recycling rates for beverage containers in the ten deposit states in 2019 averaged 75%, ranging from 59% to 91%, compared with an estimated 23% in Maryland, with no deposit (Exhibit 2). Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit. Deposit beverage containers are 2-3 times more likely to be recycled than are containers not subject to a deposit (Exhibit 3). The ten deposit states represent 27% of the U.S. population but contribute 48% of U.S. beverage container recycling.⁸ In states with beverage container deposit programs, deposits coexist with curbside collection to maximize recycling by capturing containers for beverages consumed at and away from home.

The **Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program** (SB 346, a.k.a, the “Maryland Bottle Bill”) would initiate a deposit as of January 1, 2028 and has benefitted from lessons learned over the past 50 years for successful beverage container deposit programs.

- It would maximize the reduction of beverage container litter and waste by including all beverages in metal, plastic, and glass beverage containers⁹ and setting a deposit level that will motivate the public to change behavior: 10¢ for containers holding up to 24 fluid ounces and 15¢ for larger containers, up to 3 liters.
- It would require beverage producers to take responsibility for financing and implementing the program, with significant oversight from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). The program would be implemented by a non-profit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization of all beverage producers selling or distributing redeemable beverage containers in the State. MDE’s responsibilities would include: appointing the Stewardship Organization; approving a Stewardship Plan and annual reports; and setting convenience standards and handling fees, among others. An Advisory Council of stakeholders would advise MDE on approval of the Stewardship Organization, its stewardship plan, annual reports, and program implementation and performance.
- It would create the conditions for future development and adoption of reusable/refillable beverage container systems. Ten percent of unclaimed deposits would fund a Recycling Refund Grant program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers.
- The program would pay for itself, including MDE oversight. It would be funded from registration and Stewardship Organization fees paid by beverage producers, the revenue from sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties paid by producers. Registration fees calculated to completely cover the costs of MDE oversight in the next year would be kept in a special account in the State Recycling Trust Fund that can only be used for specific program purposes. MDE’s start-up costs will be reimbursed by producers to the General Fund at the start of the first year of operation.

Several features of the bill have been updated in response to feedback from stakeholders since it was first introduced in the 2023 General Assembly, including:

- Implementation by a single stewardship organization, rather than potentially multiple organizations, to facilitate MDE oversight
- Extension of the preparation time for program launch by one year (from 18 to 30 months)
- Ensuring that MDE’s expenditures leading up to the launch are fully covered, via reimbursements of any General Fund expenses. The program is completely self-financing.

⁶ Schuyler, Qamar, *et al.* 2018. “Economic incentives reduce plastic inputs to the ocean,” *Marine Policy* 96: 250-255. October.

⁷ University of Maryland, Environmental Finance Center (EFC). 2011. “2011 Impact Analysis of a Beverage Container Deposit Program in Maryland.” December 15, p. 4.

⁸ CRI. “2024 Beverage Market Data Analysis (BMDA)” for Maryland, based on 2021 data. *Op.Cit.*

⁹ Medical beverages and infant formula are the only excluded beverages.

- Clarifying the expectations for retailers and hospitality establishments (sellers of beverages consumed on premises, such as restaurants, hotels, bars, sports venues)
- Exempting small retailers with less than 3,000 square feet of sales area from having to accept most containers for redemption and refund.
- Adding a per container materials handling fee for hospitality establishments for collecting and pre-sorting empty redeemed containers to be picked up by the program for recycling.
- Adding provisions for MDE to add more container types in the future, as materials change and technologies for redemption improve.
- Explicitly excluding cartons, pouches, and aseptic packaging from the program.
- Authorizing the grant program to finance an evaluation of the investments and policies required to increase the share of reusable containers sold in the state to 10% by 2035.

The program's benefits

Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution: The program would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually for recycling, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, diverting at least 236,000 tons of plastic, aluminum, and glass containers from litter, landfills, and incinerators.

Quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate: With a 10-cent deposit, the recycling rate for beverage containers, currently estimated at only about 25% of containers sold in the state, would more than triple, to 90% or more, within the first five years of operation.

Increase in high quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers: When the targets are achieved, 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. The program would contribute to creating a circular, bottle-to-bottle economy that maximizes the reduction in waste.

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions: By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from the bill would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent, annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 50,000 cars from the road.

Savings for taxpayers and local governments: Beverage producers would finance the costs of collecting and processing the three-quarters of beverage containers currently being disposed or littered, as well as the collection and processing of some containers currently recycled. The program will divert materials from costly landfills and incinerators. These disposal costs are currently borne by taxpayers and local governments.¹⁰

Investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems: Deposits are critical for development of refillable and reusable containers. The program will launch that transition, with a target of 10% of beverage containers sold in Maryland to be reusable and refillable by 2035.

Job creation: Increased recycling generated by a deposit program would create five times as many jobs in collection, sorting, and transporting as created by garbage collection, hauling, landfilling, or incineration.¹¹ The maintenance of reverse vending machines and investments in the reuse/refill systems will also create new opportunities.

Overwhelming public support for the Maryland Bottle Bill

According to a recent statewide public opinion poll of registered voters conducted by Gonzales Research, 95% of respondents are concerned about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution (Exhibit 4). More than 90% of respondents supported a beverage container redemption program in Maryland with a 10-cent refundable deposit that could be refunded at a convenient retailer or redemption site, financed and

¹⁰ A review of more than 30 studies of the impact of beverage container deposit programs on costs to local governments worldwide found that in the context of the overall waste management system, local governments saved costs by adopting the deposit program. Reloop. 2021. *Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Generate Cost Savings for Municipalities*. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fact-Sheet-Economic-Savings-for-Munis-8FEB2021.pdf>

¹¹ Reloop. 2021. *Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Create Jobs*. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DRS-Factsheet-Jobs-27Jan2021.pdf>.

implemented by beverage companies, not taxpayers. The level of support was at least 80% among all demographic groups, party affiliations, and geographic regions of the state (Baltimore City, Baltimore suburbs, Washington suburbs, and rural areas).¹²

Deposit programs complement extended producer responsibility for packaging laws

Deposit programs are a type of producer responsibility program that is uniquely effective in reducing beverage container litter, and can be set up in relatively quickly. They complement other programs that aim to reduce packaging, redesign hard-to-recycle packaging for recyclability and reuse, improve recycling systems, and to make producers responsible for those outcomes. Maryland needs both of these programs. Producer responsibility for packaging bills have been approved in five states so far, but they take 5-8 years to go into effect¹³ and there is still a lot to learn about what works. There's no need to wait to pass the Maryland Bottle Bill, because the elements for success are already well established, and this is the only bill of the two that will reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution.

Conclusion

Maryland is facing a plastic pollution crisis that is impacting our health and the environment. Beverage container deposit programs are highly effective in reducing beverage container litter. These programs are spreading worldwide, fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. The proposed program makes beverage producers responsible for fixing the problem and paying for it. And there is overwhelming public support for the program. **There's no excuse for kicking the can down the road. It's time to pass the Maryland Bottle Bill now.** Every year we wait, another 4 billion containers are left in the environment.

The Sierra Club respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 346.

Martha Ainsworth, Chair
Chapter Zero Waste Team
Martha.Ainsworth@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 - Beverage containers account for more than 70% of trash in Anacostia River trash traps.
- Exhibit 2 - Recycling rates for covered beverage containers in deposit states vs. Maryland, 2019
- Exhibit 3 - Recycling rates by material type in deposit and non-deposit states, 2019
- Exhibit 4 - Public support for the Maryland Bottle Bill

¹²Gonzales Polls, Inc. *Maryland Statewide Survey January 2025, Beverage Container Results*, conducted 12/27/2024 – 1/4/2025, with a sample of 811 registered voters. The margin of error is +/- 3.5%..
<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/gonzales-report-sierra-club-beverage-container-redemption-program-january-2025.pdf>.

¹³ Eunomia. 2023. *The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of U.S. Packaging Recycling Rates*. p.61.
https://www.ball.com/getmedia/dffa01b0-3b52-4b90-a107-541ece7ee07c/50-STATES_2023-V14.pdf. Three of the five states that have passed producer responsibility for packaging laws (California, Maine, Oregon) already had longstanding bottle bills in operation.

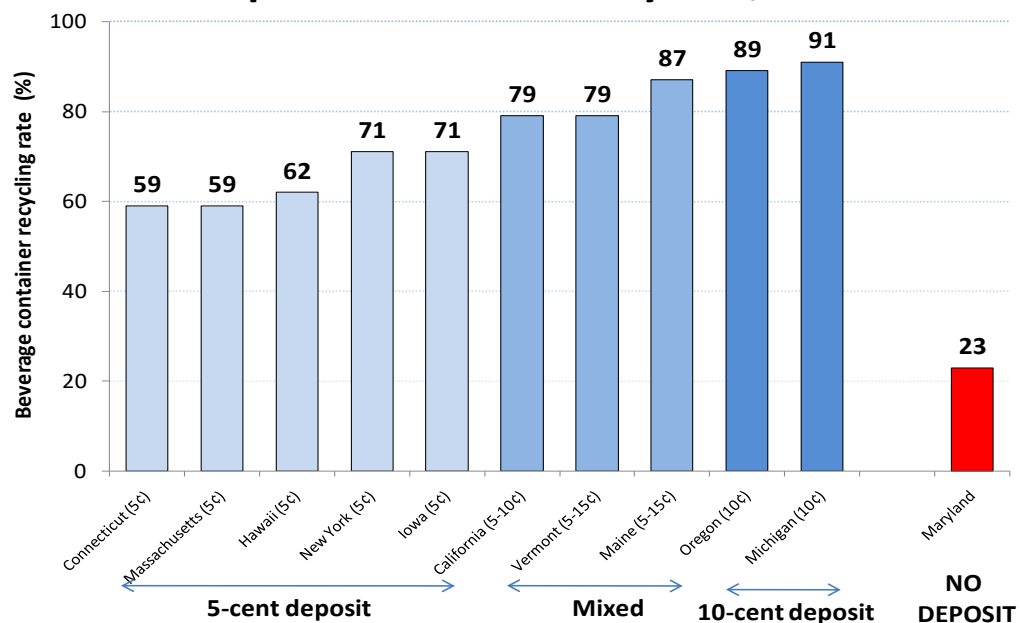
Exhibit 1: Beverage containers account for more than 70% of trash in Anacostia River trash traps, by volume



Source: Trash sort from the River Terrace Trash Trap, Anacostia River, September 28, 2024

Exhibit 2:

Recycling rates (%) for covered beverage containers in deposit states vs. Maryland, 2019



Source: Container Recycling Institute, 2022 Beverage Market Data Analysis

Exhibit 3:

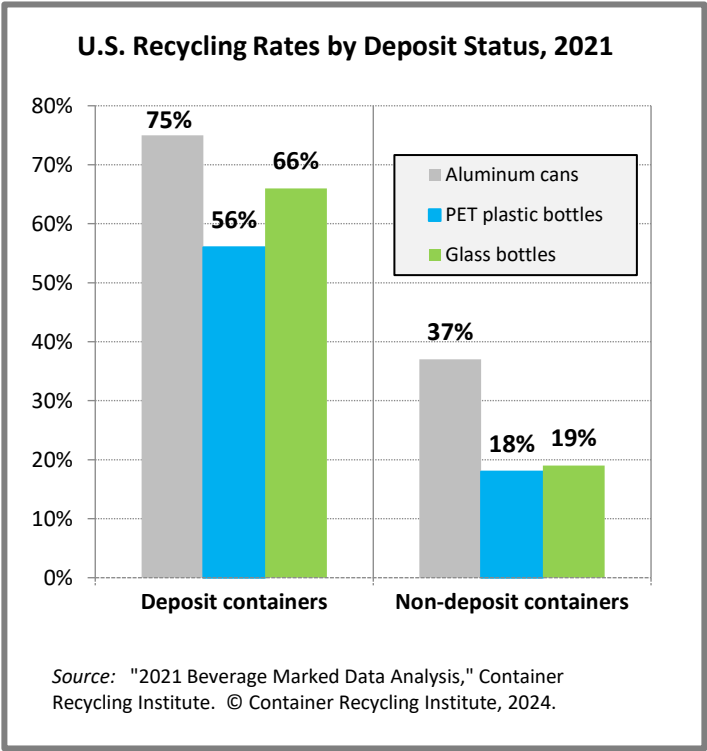
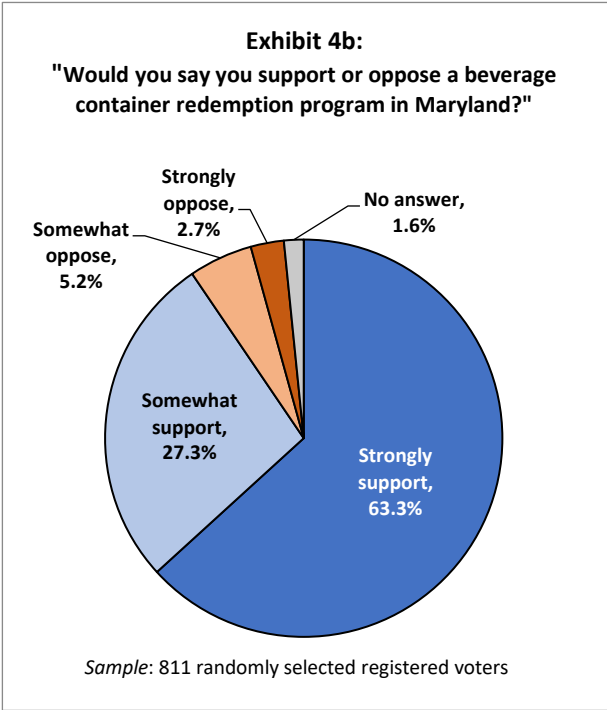
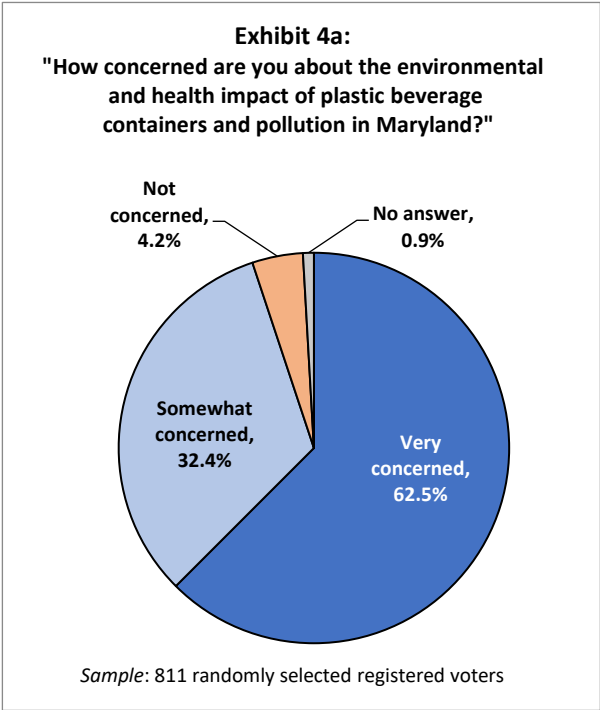


Exhibit 4: Public support for a Maryland Bottle Bill



Source: Gonzales Polls, Inc. *Maryland Statewide Survey January 2025, Beverage Container Results*
<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/gonzales-report-sierra-club-beverage-container-redemption-program-january-2025.pdf>

Testimony 2025 - SB0346 Bottle Bill.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Gant

Position: FAV

**Senate Bill SB0346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund
and Litter Reduction Program**

**Education, Energy, & Environment Committee – February 18, 2025
SUPPORT**

Thank you for accepting written testimony from Kids for Saving Earth (KSE), an organization devoted to providing educational materials, posters and a website featuring environmental educational curriculum and activities for teachers, parents, and children.

KSE strongly supports the passage of HB0232. It is budget neutral and provides incentives for the public to increase the recycling rate.

California, Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont have laws requiring a small deposit when beverage containers are purchased. In 1921, recycling rates in these ten states ranged from 50% to 89%, a vast increase over the current rate in Maryland.

A recent poll found overwhelming public support for a Maryland bottle bill that would require a 10-15 cent refundable deposit on beverage containers.

KSE urges your support for a favorable Committee report and passage in the House of Delegates.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

SB 346 - CBF - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

Senate Bill 346

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Date: February 18, 2025

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Julieta Rodrigo, Urban &
Community Resilience Manager

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 346 which establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce the litter, pollution, and costs associated with beverage containers.

Most plastic beverage containers in Maryland are not recycled, and current disposal processes worsen human and environmental health:

Although recycling programs have existed in Maryland for many years, less than one-quarter of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in the state in 2019 were recycled and reused.¹ The remaining 4 billion containers were landfilled, incinerated, or littered. This is a large waste of resources, as virgin plastic requires large amounts of fossil fuels, the extraction and burning of which result in higher greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. Incineration of plastic bottles also worsens Maryland's air quality, releasing nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and other pollutants that impact human health and affect the acidity and balance of our Chesapeake Bay.²

Plastic beverage bottles contribute to microplastic pollution and environmental damages:

Contrary to the popular belief that plastic pollution largely ends up in the ocean, most of the plastic pollution that makes its way into the rivers of the Chesapeake Bay stays in and along local waters. Indeed, about 94% of microplastics – particles measuring 5 millimeters or less in diameter – that feed into the system via its rivers stay in the system, with an additional 5% carried to the ocean and 1% remaining in the water column.³

Microplastics threaten the health of the biodiversity that lives within the Bay watershed. For example, microplastics can physically block or fill up an animal's gut, potentially reducing its ability or desire to feed. Microplastics can also cause behavioral changes as their presence changes a fish's buoyancy or swimming behavior, which can make the fish more susceptible to predators. Microplastics also can carry toxic

¹ Container Recycling Institute, 2022. "2019 Beverage Market Data Analysis."

² "CBF Study: Baltimore Incinerator Causes \$55 Million in Health Problems per Year." *Chesapeake Bay Foundation*, 11 Dec. 2017, <https://www.cbf.org/news-media/newsroom/2017/maryland/cbf-study-baltimore-incinerator-causes-55-million-in-health-problems-per-year.html>.

³ Pipkin, Whitney. "The Chesapeake Bay Is a 'Sink' for Plastic Pollution." *Bay Journal*, Bay Journal Media, 13 Oct. 2021, https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/the-chesapeake-bay-is-a-sink-for-plastic-pollution/article_ca6f12ec-21fd-11ec-b0c4-cf096494dd62.html.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

chemicals into the fish's body, which could bioaccumulate as the fish consumes other prey that have ingested plastics, and eventually make its way to human consumption.⁴ All of these factors threaten the health of our ecosystem, as well as threaten the longevity and safety of Maryland's seafood industry.

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter:

Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs (California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Vermont).⁵ Together, they average a 60% recycling rate for beverage containers, compared to 24% in states without these programs.⁶ The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is much higher than for containers not subject to a deposit, and it increases with a higher deposit amount. The two states that offer a 10-cent redemption refund, Michigan and Oregon, have the highest beverage bottle recycling rates in the nation, reaching 73%⁷ and 87% recycling rates in 2023⁸, respectively.

Beverage container deposit programs make financial sense for our local and state governments.:

Beverage container deposit programs do not add cost burdens to our state, but rather can provide significant savings, which is especially important considering Maryland's budget constraints. 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. The reduction of disposed materials is critical, as Maryland counties are dedicating much time and resources to extend the capacity of their almost-full landfills.⁹

Recycling is also beneficial for job creation in the state. Indeed, deposit programs create 11 to 38 times more jobs than a curbside recycling system for beverage containers and at least five times more jobs in container collection, sorting, and transport than in garbage collecting, hauling and landfilling.¹⁰

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 346.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

⁴ Pipkin, Whitney. "Picture of Chesapeake Microplastics Grows Clearer." *Bay Journal*, Bay Journal Media, 7 June 2021, https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/picture-of-chesapeake-microplastics-grows-clearer/article_87bd3606-c3e1-11eb-bdc4-4f1a3864c6f9.html.

⁵ "Redemption Rates and Other Features of 10 U.S. State Deposit Programs." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/images/Allstates/10-state%20Summary%208-5-22r.pdf>.

⁶ "Bottle Bills", Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.container-recycling.org/index.php/issues/bottle-bills>.

⁷ "Michigan." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/michigan>.

⁸ "Oregon." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/oregon>.

⁹ "Olszewski Announces Plans to Consider Vertical Expansion of Eastern Sanitary Landfill to Extend Site Longevity by up to 20 Years." *Olszewski Announces Plans to Consider Vertical Expansion of Eastern Sanitary Landfill to Extend Site Longevity by up to 20 Years* / *Baltimore County Government*, Baltimore County Government, 22 Jan. 2024, www.baltimorecountymd.gov/county-news/2024/01/22/olszewski-announces-plans-to-consider-vertical-expansion-of-eastern-sanitary-landfill-to-extend-site-longevity-by-up-to-20-years.

¹⁰ "Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Create More Jobs." *ReLoop*, 5 Feb. 2021, www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/DRS-Factsheet-Jobs-5FEB2021.pdf.

SB0346 FAV MSchweisguth Bottle Bill 0214.pdf

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV

Melissa A Schweisguth
Hyattsville, MD 20782

February 14, 2025

Re: FAVORABLE position on SB0346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Felldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee members,

Thank you for your service to the State of Maryland. I am writing to ask that the committee provide a favorable report on SB0346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, and support its passage in the House and General Assembly.

SB0346 would solve two persistent and widespread problems that have negative environmental and economic impacts: littering and lack of recycling of single use-beverage containers (e.g. plastic water and soda bottles, beer bottles, cans).

I live in District 22, where I have adopted a trail with my local watershed group, lead and carry out trail clean ups, and run and bike across the extensive trail system spanning Prince George's and Montgomery counties. Discarded single-use beverage containers are the most common item collected in every cleanup. They dot the trails, river and streambank, and roads throughout my area and the state, too. Beverage containers are one of the most common litter items in the . The Anacostia Watershed Society's Anacostia River trash traps, which capture litter from my watershed. Plastic bottles are especially concerning as they break into tiny "microplastics" that contaminate the environment and enter our food chain when animals ingest them.

Data indicate that less than one-quarter of beverage containers sold in Maryland are recycled; only about 1.2 billion (23 percent) of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland annually are recycled while 4 billion are wasted—landfilled, littered or incinerated. This results in negative climate and environmental impacts due to continued use of virgin materials, as well as the impacts of incineration (e.g., toxic ash) and landfilling (e.g., methane)

SB0346 solves these problems by creating a refundable deposit system, wherein consumers pay a small deposit (10 or 15 cents) when they purchase beverages, and can get the deposit back when they return containers for recycling. The proposed system includes conveniently located return facilities, a Stewardship Organization representing the container industry, and a Plan that would be approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MDE would oversee the program and provide enforcement, with input from an Advisory Council.

The proposed deposit system is a proven model: ten states, covering about 90 million people, have well-established deposit programs with high success rates. According to data provided by the Maryland Sierra Club, programs with at least a 10-cent deposit recover up to 90 percent of containers for reuse or recycling, more than triple Maryland's beverage container recycling rate.

The proposed deposit program is cost-effective as it provides an incentive for consumers to maximize recycling and would leverage beverage industry funding to run the program, avoiding increased costs for the government. It would reduce the cost of collecting, recycling, landfilling and incinerating beverage containers, provide high quality recycled materials for container manufacturing, stimulate recycling markets and investments in deposit systems, improve water quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

For these reasons, I enthusiastically support SB0346 and ask that the committee return a favorable report and support its passage in the Senate and General Assembly.

Thank you for considering my comments on this important measure.

Sincerely,

Melissa A Schweisguth

Testimony FAV SB0346 Container Recycling NNWB 0214

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 4314
Silver Spring, MD 20914

February 14 2025

Re: FAVORABLE position on SB0346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee members,

Thank you for your service to the State of Maryland. I am writing on behalf of Neighbors of the Northwest Branch (NNWB), a local 501(C)(3) nonprofit, citizen-based action group dedicated to restoring the health of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. We work to ensure that this urban treasure can be safely enjoyed by wildlife, our families, and Montgomery and Prince Georges county residents for generations to come.

NNWB takes a FAVORABLE position on SB0346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. We respectfully ask that you issue a favorable committee report and continue to support it through passage.

SB0346 would solve two major problems: littering and lack of recycling of single-use beverage containers (e.g., plastic water and soda bottles, beer bottles, cans), which have negative environmental and economic impacts. As we know from the many clean ups we have led and the time we spend enjoying the watershed, discarded single-use beverage containers are common due to littering or unintentional loss from recycling bins and trucks. The Anacostia Watershed Society determined that beverage containers are one of the most common litter items in Anacostia River trash traps. Plastic bottles break into tiny toxic particles (microplastics) that contaminate soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals ingest them.

Data indicate that less than one-quarter of beverage containers sold in Maryland are recycled, resulting in continued use of virgin materials, which has negative impacts on the environment and climate. Of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland annually, only about 1.2 billion (23 percent) are recycled while 4 billion are wasted—landfilled, littered or incinerated.

SB0346 addresses these problems by creating a statewide deposit and return system with a small deposit (10 or 15 cents) that consumers would pay when they purchase beverages and then receive back when they return beverage containers for recycling. SB0346 provides for the establishment of efficient, conveniently located redemption facilities with measures to prevent

fraud, a Stewardship Organization representing producers that sell beverage containers in Maryland, and a Plan approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MDE would provide oversight and enforcement, with input from an Advisory Council.

The proposed deposit system is a proven model: ten states, covering about 90 million people, have long standing, successful beverage container deposit programs. Data indicate that programs with at least a 10-cent refundable deposit recover as much as 90 percent of used beverage containers for reuse or recycling - a result that equates to tripling Maryland's current beverage container recycling rate.

The approach that SB0346 proposes is cost effective as it leverages beverage industry funding to launch and maintain the program, avoiding increased costs for the government, and provides an incentive for consumers to maximize recycling. Moreover, it would reduce the costs of collecting, recycling, landfilling and incinerating beverage containers for governments and consumers, provide high quality, food-grade recycled content that can be made into new containers, stimulate regional recycling markets, improve water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, and stimulate investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems.

For these reasons, NNWB endorses SB0346 and asks that the committee return a favorable report and support its passage in the Senate and General Assembly. SB0346 is a win-win and a positive return on investment for governments, consumers and producers.

Thank you for considering NNWB's comments on this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora Swisher".

Nora Swisher
President, Neighbors of the Northwest Branch
www.neighborsnwb.org

2025 SB0346-HB0232 Beverage Container Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael O'Connor

Position: FAV



FREDERICK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

February 11, 2024

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Chair, Senator Brian Feldman

**Re: Support for Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Bill
Maryland SB0346 and HB0232**

Chair Feldman, and members of the Committee,

The City of Frederick offers support for the vision of the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction bill. Though City government operations are not likely to incur any costs to operate this program, it will benefit our residents by reducing litter, increasing recycling, and reducing the waste stream the city processes through its trash collection operations.

By encouraging reuse and recycling, the City hopes this will reduce the amount of litter on our roadways and in our streams and waterways. The City operates Adopt-a-Road and stream cleanup programs multiple times per year to reduce the litter before it reaches our downstream neighbors.

Concessions to allow our small businesses to either be exempted or more easily comply are also appreciated.

Overall, this is a positive step toward sustainability by improving the places we live, work, and play, including our waterways and wildlife habitats. We look forward to a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Connor

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAVSB346_.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



SB346

**Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 346**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 346 would establish a Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Fund and Litter Reduction Program within the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), administered by the Office of Recycling. The purpose of the program is to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers in the State.

This legislation establishes a framework for "producers" and "beverage container stewardship organizations" to develop and implement beverage container stewardship plans. Plans would be submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment for approval. A grant program would be formulated to support the goals of the program, provisions for redemption facilities, an advisory council, and enforcement provisions.

In his encyclical letter "Laudato Si'," Pope Francis reminds us of our sacred duty to safeguard the Earth, our common home, and to preserve its beauty and resources for present and future generations. Beverage container waste in particular poses a significant threat to the integrity of creation, contaminating our oceans, rivers, and landscapes, and endangering the health of wildlife and ecosystems. As custodians of God's creation, we are called to take decisive action to address this ecological crisis and restore harmony to the natural world.

Plastic bottled water consumption in particular continues to contribute to environmental degradation and exacerbate the global water crisis. This legislation would promote a significant reduction in plastic bottle pollution and promote partnership to reduce the same with those whose business endeavors perpetuate their distribution and use.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on **Senate Bill 346**.

SB 346 written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Nancy Koran

Position: FAV

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment
Testimony on: SB 346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Position: Support
Hearing date: February 18, 2025

The Earth Ministry of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Bethesda MD¹ strongly supports SB 346, commonly known as the bottle bill. It is designed to reduce pollution from plastic, glass and metal beverage containers and to boost recycling.

In Maryland, 5.9 billion beverage containers were sold in 2021, but only about a quarter were recycled. The remaining 4.4 billion went into landfills, incinerators or were littered.² During heavy rains, beverage bottles littered along our landscape and roadways wash into storm drains where they eventually reach streams, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay and even the Atlantic Ocean. These plastic bottles break into ever smaller pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds and marine animals.³ These microplastics have also been found in our food, air and water, and in our blood, saliva, liver, kidneys and in placentas.⁴

Even when plastic bottles are placed in curbside recycling containers, they are often contaminated by other co-mingled trash. Contaminated bottles can't be recycled and are either incinerated, where they release toxic air pollution, or put into landfills, where they leach harmful chemicals. Because plastic is a "forever" chemical, plastic waste is an overriding concern of our Earth Ministry.

This is a good place to explain that one of the central tenets of our Unitarian Universalist faith is a call to "respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Because of the failure to control plastic waste, plastic now permeates and pollutes the environment that we, along with all life on Earth, depend on to sustain our lives. And the volume of plastic is growing.

About half a billion tons of plastic are produced globally each year, more than twice the amount two decades ago.⁵ "More plastic is being produced, and an even smaller percentage of it is being recycled. The crisis just keeps getting worse and worse, and without drastic change it will continue to worsen as the industry plans to triple plastic production by 2050."⁶

Of course, plastic is not inherently bad. "Disposable plastic syringes prevent the spread of disease. Contact lenses, hearing aids, artificial limbs, tubing to unblock veins and live-saving heart valves

¹ The Earth Ministry is a member-created committee established in accordance with the Congregation's bylaws. This testimony is submitted by and on behalf of the Earth Ministry. The Congregation has not taken a position on this bill.

² Container Recycling Institute estimate, based on 2021 data.

³ Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter. https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/beverage-container-recycling-refund-litter-reduction-coalition-fact-sheet_1-20-2025_0.pdf

⁴ HARVARD medicine magazine, Spring 2023, "Microplastics Everywhere."

⁵ Hiroko Tabuchi, "Saudi Arabia Leads Pushback Against Global Plastic Treaty," NY Times, Nov. 30, 2024.

⁶ Lisa Ramsden, Greenpeace USA on NPR's All Things Considered, Oct. 24, 2022.

are all composed of plastic.”⁷ But pollution from plastic bottles is different--it’s a global crisis. Yet there is a simple fix.

Bottle bills are a tried-and-true solution to address litter and improve recycling. “...Since the 1970s, these programs have proven to be the most effective post-consumer recycling systems ever created”.⁸ Currently, 10 states and more than 40 countries have enacted bottle bills. Globally, Australia, Europe and India have passed container deposit laws in recent years. In the US, however, no state has passed a bottle bill since 2017. The US congress considered a national bottle bill in 2021 and 2023. Those too, failed. Maryland has been trying to pass a bottle bill for nearly 20 years, since at least 2007, without success. In an editorial last November, The Baltimore Sun wrote, “It’s time for Maryland to get serious about imposing a deposit on plastic bottles.”⁹

Failed attempts to pass bottle bills come at a time when public concern about plastic pollution is soaring, especially among young people concerned about the environment. Citizens are asking for these programs. Numerous states and the District of Columbia have tried to pass a bottle bill.¹⁰ States with bottle bills can achieve recycling rates of up to 90% of their beverage bottles. In Maryland, by comparison, the estimated recycling rate is only 22%. So, what is preventing Maryland and other states from passing bottle bills?

“The old industry playbook has kept new Bottle Bills at bay in the US for decades,” the New England-based Conservation Law Foundation explains in its 2022 report, *The Big Beverage Playbook for Avoiding Responsibility*. It details how the industry delays, distracts and derails proposed bottle bills. And it notes that when these bills were beginning to gain momentum in the mid-1970s, the industry spent “a minimum of \$20 million a year” fighting bottle bills. It also notes that between 1991 and 2011, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group, the beverage industry “outspent proponents of Bottle Bills by as much as 30 to 1.”¹¹

Fast-forward to today. The trade group for plastic producers, National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR), concerned by rising anti-plastic sentiment, has developed social media campaigns and an infomercial by actor Dennis Quaid to tout the virtues of single-use plastic.¹²

This fierce and long-standing opposition comes from those who created this environmental tragedy in the first place. Meanwhile, conservation groups such as Anacostia Waterkeepers, Anacostia Watershed Society, Alice Ferguson Foundation and private organizations such as Baltimore’s Waterfront Partnership have taken on the task of collecting plastic bottles and other litter from our communities and waterways. But they are facing an ever-increasing tide of beverage containers and other litter.

⁷ Danielle Smith-Llera, *You Are Eating Plastic Every Day*, North Mankato, MN, Compass Point Books, 2020, p. 50.

⁸ Kirstie L. Pecci, Peter W. Blair and Kevin P. Budris, *The Big Beverage Playbook for Avoiding Responsibility*, Feb. 2022, p. 3.

⁹ “If Maryland had a dime for every wasted plastic bottle,” Editorial, *Baltimore Sun*, Nov. 23, 2024.

¹⁰ *Bottle Bills in the USA*, Jan. 18, 2025. <https://www.bottlebill.org/legislation/usa.htm>.

¹¹ Kirstie L. Pecci, Peter W. Blair and Kevin P. Budris, *The Big Beverage Playbook for Avoiding Responsibility*, Feb. 2022, p.11.

¹² Hiroko Tabuchi, “Inside the Plastic Industry’s Battle to Win Over Hearts and Minds.” *NY Times*, Nov. 27, 2024.

The sensible approach is to keep beverage containers out of the environment in the first place by enacting bottle bills. We join in support of Marylanders across the state in asking for a bottle bill this year and urge a favorable report on SB 346.

Nancy Koran
4960 Fairmont Ave. 1001
Bethesda, MD 20814
nancykoran@hotmail.com
Member, Earth Ministry of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Bethesda MD

SB0346.LetterofSupport.2.14.25.pdf

Uploaded by: Nancy Meyer

Position: FAV

**Nancy J. Meyer
Chair
Prince George's County
Solid Waste Advisory Commission
c/o Kevin Roy Serrona
3500 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772**

Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair

February 14, 2025

Education, Energy, and Environment
Committee Members
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Feldman and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission (PGCSWAC) which was established "to provide community input, guidance and advice to the County Executive and County Council on matters relating to solid waste management in the County". The powers and duties of the PGCSWAC include providing review, recommendations, and impacts of various plans, reports, operations, budgets and impacts of County actions related to solid waste management and resource recovery. We also seek and support input from citizens, business and industries throughout the County.

PGCSWAC's powers and duties includes recommending local and state legislation necessary to accomplish effective solid waste management. The PGCSWAC is made up of concerned local citizens, advocates, and professionals in fields relating to solid waste management, resource recovery and environmental stewardship.

Our concern today is the critical necessity of passing and implementing Senate Bill 0346, **The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Bill** now which would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland.

Despite enormous local efforts in Prince George's County to address litter that is prolific on our roads, our parks, our waterways, and commercial areas, litter and its deleterious impacts, remains more than a persistent problem.

The ubiquitous presence of litter says a lot. And none of it is good. The material impact degrades our precious habitats, fouls our waterways, is ingested by birds and animals and creates unnecessary work that never realizes success. Its presence denigrates and depresses our communities, our business and our neighborhoods. And beverages are one of the biggest contributors to litter.

In one year alone, in Maryland, approximately 5.5 BILLION beverage containers are sold. And despite the widespread availability of curbside recycling, only 23% of these containers are recycled. And 2.6 billion of the 4 billion containers left are available to be disposed of in the trash, and unfortunately all around our communities.

Ten states already have passed legislation to incentive the return of Beverage containers to redemption centers and is being considered by several others. In those ten states, nine of those states boast the highest recycling rates in the country.

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Bill would provide reverse vending machines for convenient redemption in order to achieve at least a 90% redemption rate. The program would be self-financing from fees paid by producers, revenue from material sales and penalties.

The benefits are many. There would be an enormous reduction in beverage container litter, a quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate, an increase in the quality of recycling material going to market, a reduction in greenhouse gas, savings for tax payers and local governments, and job creation. And of course, a much cleaner Prince George's County.

Please support the Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Bill (SB 0346). We need to pass this bill now. Other states have demonstrated the success of this legislation and we need to follow suit this year.

Sincerely yours,



Nancy J. Meyer

CC: Honorable Eric Olson, Councilmember, District 3
Prince George's County Council
Kenneth Battle, Committee Chair
Transport, infrastructure, Energy and Environment
Prince George's County Council
Marilyn E. Naumann, Associate Director
Resource Recovery Division, Dept. of Environment
Barbara Sollner-Webb, Vice-Chair,
Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission
Na'ilah Dawkins, Commissioner
Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission
Charles L. Renninger, Commissioner
Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission
David C. Brosch, Commissioner
Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission
Mouhaman S. Kola, Commissioner
Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission
William L. Walmsley, Jr, Commissioner
Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission
Jonathan P. Madagu
Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisor Commission

Letter of Support SB346_Educ_Energ_Envir_Committee

Uploaded by: Nate Groenendyk

Position: FAV

Robert S. Croslin
Mayor



Tracey E. Douglas
City Administrator

February 5, 2025

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

RE: Support for HB0232/SB0346 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chairman Feldman,

On behalf of the Hyattsville City Council, I am writing to express our strong support of HB0232/SB0346, which proposes instituting a refundable deposit on recyclable beverage containers sold in the state of Maryland. This legislation addresses the significant issue of littering in our community and the entire state. Our roads, parks, streams, and rivers are strewn with single-use beverage containers. Clean-up efforts in our community routinely find these containers to be the most common of all litter items and some of the most damaging to our environment as their contaminants enter our waterways and eventually our food chain.

The proposed refundable deposit, which is also supported by the Maryland Sierra Club, Anacostia Watershed Society, and Anacostia Riverkeeper, will incentivize the return of beverage containers to redemption or recycling facilities. This will decrease the amount of litter while increasing the number of containers sent for recycling rather than the landfill, which will have a significant environmental impact.

We strongly urge you to support this legislation and thank you for your commitment to this critical issue. We look forward to your continued partnership in improving and protecting our environment.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Croslin
Mayor

cc: Hyattsville City Council

SB 346

Uploaded by: Neely James

Position: FAV

Dear Maryland Delegates:

Please strongly support the Maryland bottle bill Additional testimony for SB 346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. I am the owner-operator of Mother's Cantina, and I am in my seventeenth season of successful business in Ocean City, Maryland. Our position on the bill is not only favorable but Highly Favorable. Please accept this letter as our written testimony.

Mother's Cantina is an Ocean Friendly Restaurant with Surfrider Foundation and 2019 winner of the League of Conservation Voters Theodore Roosevelt Award. That said, conservation is not new to me or my business. As part of my commitment to Surfrider Foundation, I recycle (out of my pocket) nine cubic yards of glass every two weeks. Many restaurants use plastic instead of glass, and would produce the same or more plastic bottle waste.

The amount of plastic bottle waste in trash cans and found on the beach, dunes roadways, and waterways is evident to locals and tourists. The most littered items are disposable beverage containers. Without recycling available in Ocean City, our waste stream is overloaded by items that are potentially reusable and recycled. A bottle bill is a major step in the right direction to give the people who are most likely to litter an incentive not to litter and to return the containers for a rebate. Watershed groups like Surfrider Foundation, Assateague Coastal Trust, and more hold cleanups often, but these efforts can only raise awareness and quantify the amount of trash and magnitude of the problem rather than solving it. Of course, statewide education and preventive measures and enforcement should accompany this effort.

When passed, this bottle bill can be expected to accomplish the following:

- Reduce litter of beverage containers by as much as 69-84%, as has been shown in states with a bottle bill
- Create jobs with the proposed redemption centers
- Reduce the costs to taxpayers, as we will pay less for disposal, litter cleanups, and curbside recycling
- Increase the beverage container recovery rates at least two and a half times, thereby also reducing landfill waste
- Help keep toxins out of our waterways and water supply.
- Keep Ocean City clean and inviting to locals and tourists, increasing small business revenue.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I'm counting on you to do the right thing for Maryland.

Please add the attached testimony to the witness list for SB 346, heard by the EEE Committee on February 18, 2025.

Neely James
Mother's Cantina
2810 Philadelphia Ave.
Ocean City, MD 21842
neely@motherscantina.com
443-481-7285

SB346 Ramos testimony EEE 2.25.pdf

Uploaded by: Odette Ramos

Position: FAV



Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman

District 14

(410) 396 - 4814

odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 553

Baltimore MD 21202

SB346- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Fund and Litter Reduction Program
February 18, 2025
FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

I am writing to urge your support of **SB346 The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would add a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The bill outlines that the program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit Stewardship Organization, not by the City or its residents. The Maryland Department of the Environment will provide strong oversight.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it would capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, diverting an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing pollution from littered plastic bottles that break down in the environment and get washed into the Chesapeake Bay. Recent polling has found that more than 90% of Maryland's voting public would support the Bottle Bill.

Baltimore City would work to pass our own law to implement this program. Ours could include redemption in our own already existing city-run recycling and transfer stations, which will not be an additional burden to our municipal solid waste collections nor to grocery stores or other businesses. This program would benefit our residents in two main ways:

- **Shut down the Baltimore incinerator.** By diverting bottles and cans from the waste stream, the amount of waste to the incinerator and to the landfills is reduced, thus making it easier to close the incinerator. The incinerator is one of the leading causes of cancer and other health problems to areas in our city.
- **Reduce in litter.** Residents would either keep their bottles and cans to redeem another time, or residents would pick up any bottles and cans that were littered on the ground so they can redeem the deposit.

Please pass a favorable report for SB346.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached on 410-396-4814 or via email at odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos, Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

SB 346

Uploaded by: Patrick Crump

Position: FAV

RE: Support for the Bottle Bill (SB0346)

Dear Senators Feldman and Kagan, Chair and Co-Chair of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

I understand that your Committee will soon be considering a vote on the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, or the Bottle Bill (HB0232). This bill was introduced last year, but did not make it out of committee.

This bill is highly popular among Marylanders. A January 2025 public opinion poll conducted by the Sierra Club found that more than 90% of Maryland voters would support a beverage container deposit program to prevent littered and wasted beverage containers and reduce plastic pollution. According to the Container Recycling Institute, about 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold each year in Maryland, but only a quarter are captured for recycling. As a result, more than 4 billion beverage containers, 2.6 billion of which are plastic, end up in the environment annually -- in landfills, on roadsides, or in waterways -- or are incinerated.

I personally support the bill because it will increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce litter, pollution, and the cost associated with them. It will also encourage grassroots initiatives which not only serve as a catalyst for significant positive results, but also raise the collective conscience and the "we are in this together" bonding - both being sorely needed and an empowering spirit of community. The bill will offer a terrific income-generation opportunity for fundraisers for many organizations from the Girl and Boy Scouts to school environmental organizations to individuals on their daily walks.

Ten states have had such bottle bills in place since the 1970s, and have seen recycling rates of between 60-90%, compared to Maryland's 23%. And yet, since then the plastics and beverage industries have successfully blocked bottle bills in other states. As a Maryland voter, I urge you to put public opinion and care for our environment before industry qualms. Please support the successful passage of the Bottle Bill in your committee.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Crump". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "P" and "C".

Patrick Crump

817 Hillsboro Drive, Silver Spring, 20902, MD

Just Zero - Testimony in Support of SB 346.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Blair

Position: FAV



February 18, 2025

Chair Feldman
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Maryland State Senate
2 West Miller
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 346 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 346. **Just Zero strongly supports this bill.**

Just Zero is a national environmental non-profit advocacy organization that works alongside communities, policy makers, scientists, educators, organizers, and others to implement just and equitable solutions to climate-damaging and toxic production, consumption, and waste disposal practices. We believe that all people deserve Zero Waste solutions with zero climate-damaging emissions and zero toxic exposures.

SB 346 would establish a beverage container recycling refund program – more commonly known as a “Bottle Bill” – in Maryland. Just Zero supports Bottle Bills because they reduce litter, increase recycling rates, create jobs, and develop both the consumer culture and infrastructure necessary for reusable beverage systems. If enacted this bill will significantly improve Maryland’s environment and economy.

We understand that Maryland is also considering adopting an Extended Producer Responsibility (“EPR”) for packaging program (SB 901). While we strongly support the development of an EPR for packaging program, it does not alleviate the need to enact a strong Bottle Bill.

Maryland should enact both programs because they are complementary. Passing both programs will enhance the benefits and goals of each, while choosing one program over the other will undermine Maryland’s efforts to effectively address the plastic pollution and waste crisis.

I. Bottle Bill Programs Are Incredibly Popular and Prevalent Across the World.

Bottle Bill programs have been implemented in dozens of jurisdictions around the world, with new programs developing each year. The first Bottle Bill was established in 1970, in British



Columbia, Canada.¹ Since then, over 50 jurisdictions have adopted programs, including ten U.S. states, almost all Canadian provinces, and a large portion of the European Union.² Right now, over 300 million people live in communities with a Bottle Bill.³ This number is expected to grow as more programs come online. Internationally, France, Poland, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay are all considering or actively developing Bottle Bill programs.⁴ This legislative session, Illinois, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington state, and Washington D.C. are all considering proposals to implement Bottle Bill programs. Massachusetts, New York, Michigan, and Vermont are considering proposals to expand and strengthen their existing Bottle Bill programs. These states understand Bottle Bills are necessary to meet waste reduction, recycling, and climate goals.

II. Bottle Bills Provide Significant Environmental and Economic Benefits

The reason Bottle Bill programs are so popular and prevalent throughout the world is because they're incredibly effective at reducing litter, increasing recycling, and creating jobs. Moreover, these programs create the consumer culture and infrastructure that is necessary to shift away from single-use disposal beverage containers to reusable and refillable beverage systems. Importantly, through producer responsibility requirements, Bottle Bill programs provide these benefits while saving consumers and governments money.

A. Litter Reduction

Placing a refundable deposit on every single-use beverage container sold in Maryland will incentivize consumers to recycle their empty containers. Essentially, the refundable deposit creates an understanding that while you are buying the beverage, you are renting the container. This incentive is extremely important because most single-use beverages are consumed on-the-go and outside of the home. This is why you see plastic soda bottles littering parks, streets, and streams, but not plastic peanut butter jars.

Bottle Bills can dramatically reduce the amount of litter that we see. After Hawaii enacted a Bottle Bill program in 2005, the number of beverage containers collected in Hawaii for Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup fell from 23,471 in 2004, to 8,200 in 2008 – a 65% drop in just four years.⁵ All ten states with Bottle Bills have experienced significant litter reduction. A 2020 study by Keep America Beautiful found that states without Bottle Bills have double the amount of beverage container litter than their Bottle Bill counterparts.⁶ The report

¹ Reloop, [Global Deposit Book 2024: An Overview of Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Beverage Containers](#), 108 (Dec. 2024).

² *Id.* at 22, 72.

³ *Id.* at 13.

⁴ *Id.* at 189, 215-16.

⁵ Haw. Dep't of Health, [Report to the Twenty-Fifth Legislature 2010, Deposit Beverage Container Program](#), 6 (Dec. 2009).

⁶ Keep America Beautiful, [2020 National Litter Study](#), 3 (May 2021).



also found that states with Bottle Bills had less overall litter.⁷ Less litter doesn't just mean cleaner, more vibrant communities, it also means less spending on clean-up efforts. Estimates show that the United States spends more than \$11 billion on litter clean up every year.⁸

B. Increased Recycling of Beverage Containers

Though the ten current Bottle Bill states only represent 27% of the U.S. population, they account for over 50% of all beverage containers recycled annually.⁹ On average, states with Bottle Bills have double the recycling rates than those that rely solely on curbside recycling programs.¹⁰ For plastic and glass bottles, Bottle Bill programs achieve recycling rates that are three times higher than single-stream recycling systems.¹¹

While curbside recycling is convenient, it is operated as a single-stream, and this comes with a cost – contamination. Single-stream recycling depends first and foremost on educated consumers making the right choice about what can and cannot go into the blue bin. From there, the burden is on Material Recovery Facilities (“MRFs”) to remove any unrecyclable materials while also processing and sorting the commingled recyclables into distinct separate streams. These sorting processes are imperfect. According to the National Waste and Recycling Association, roughly 25% of what is placed into the single-stream recycling system is too contaminated to go anywhere other than a landfill.¹²

Bottle Bill programs, on the other hand, evade contamination more effectively and properly sort recyclable materials on the front end. This results in higher quality recycled material, significantly increasing its ability to be made into new products. Higher quality also is critical in avoiding downcycling. Downcycling results in recycled material being used for purposes that fail to capture the full environmental and economic benefits associated with recycling a product. In the case of beverage containers, the highest and best use is bottle-to-bottle recycling, where containers are recycled directly into new beverage containers. Common examples of downcycling with beverage containers include turning plastic beverage containers into carpet and textiles and using glass beverage containers for road improvement projects or landfill cover. While these uses are preferential to disposing of the material, it still means the materials can only be used once as opposed to being recycled repeatedly.

Creating a standalone program to collect and recycle beverage containers ensures that the materials are uncontaminated and able to be readily recycled. Moreover, Bottle Bill programs

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Andrew Lisa, [It Costs Over \\$11 Billion Per Year to Clean Up Litter – How the Pandemic’s Effect on Trash Output May Make It Worse](#), Yahoo (April 22, 2021).

⁹ Marissa Heffernan, [Report: Bottle bill states recycle more, provide models](#), Resource Recycling (Jan. 2, 2024).

¹⁰ Container Recycling Institute, [U.S. Nominal Recycling Rates by Deposit Status](#) (2019).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Maggie Koerth, [The Era of Easy Recycling May be Coming to an End](#), FiveThirtyEight (Jan. 10, 2019).



lead to higher overall recycling rates in those states since municipal and curbside recycling systems can then focus their efforts on capturing and recycling other common recyclables.¹³

C. Job Creation

Bottle Bills also create good, local jobs. Reports show that Bottle Bills can create between 11 and 38 times more jobs than curbside recycling.¹⁴ These jobs include technicians to service reverse vending machines, bag drop systems, as well as other forms of beverage container collection, storage systems, and sorting systems. Bottle Bills also create jobs associated with hauling beverage containers from redemption locations to centralized storage areas. There are also other indirect jobs created that are associated with increased recycling and manufacturing of products from recycled materials. A recent analysis of New York's Bottle Bill program found that it supports 5,700 jobs statewide.¹⁵

D. Creating a Pathway to Reusable and Refillable Beverage Systems

Additionally, Bottle Bill programs develop the infrastructure and consumer culture necessary to support reusable and refillable beverage systems. Historically, beverage companies relied on consumers to return bottles to be refilled. Because glass bottles were expensive to manufacture, refilling existing bottles saved costs. So, to encourage refilling, beverage companies utilized a deposit-return program to ensure glass containers were brought back and refilled. This harkens back to the days of the “milk man.”

Just Zero strongly supports the language in SB 346 that requires at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in Maryland be returned and refilled by December 31, 2034. This is a necessary and achievable program goal as demonstrated by other countries and states with high functioning Bottle Bill programs. For example, in Germany, 82% of all beer is sold in reusable bottles, 99% of beer bottles are returned for reuse, and 54% of beverages sold in Germany are in reusables.¹⁶ Moreover, refillables account for 24%, 27%, and 54% of the beverage market share in Brazil, Mexico, and Columbia respectively.¹⁷ 84% of beer sold in Ontario, Canada is in refillable bottles collected through the provinces Bottle Bill system.¹⁸

Finally, since launching a statewide refillable beer bottle system through its Bottle Bill program, Oregon reported a diversion of 407,840 bottles from recycling for reuse in 2019..¹⁹ Unfortunately Oregon's reuse program stalled because it was entirely voluntary. SB 346 shows that Maryland

¹³ Eunomia, [The 50 States of Recycling: a State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates](#), 6 (Dec. 2023).

¹⁴ ReLoop, [Factsheet: Deposit Return Systems Create More Jobs](#), 2 (2022).

¹⁵ Sarah Edwards, Eunomia Research and Consulting, Inc., [Employment and Economic Impact of Container Deposits](#), table E1 (Jan. 2019).

¹⁶ Upstream, [Beverage Refill and the New Reuse Economy](#) (July 1, 2023).

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Container Recycling Institute, [Exploring refillables in the United States](#), 2 (April 7, 2021).



learned from Oregon's mistake by including a mandate for reusables which will ensure that the program consistently grows to foster reuse, not just recycling.

E. Bottles Bills Provide All These Benefits While Saving Residents and Communities Money.

Bottle Bill programs also provide these benefits at no cost to consumers or government, instead placing financial responsibility on producers who are creating and distributing single-use beverage containers. If a Bottle Bill program is developed in Maryland, cities, towns, and residents will no longer be stuck paying to collect, sort, and recycle all these containers. Instead, the large companies that manufacture them will.

The reduction in litter resulting from this program will also save the state and local governments money. In a span of five years, the Maryland Highway Administration spent \$39 million to clean up trash along state roads.²⁰ This is only a fraction of the cost of addressing litter as the figure does not include the costs of addressing beverage container litter along local roads, along beaches, and in rivers.

III. **Maryland Should Adopt a Bottle Bill *and* an EPR for Packaging Program.**

We understand that Maryland is considering adopting an EPR for packaging program.²¹ While we strongly support the legislative efforts to enact an EPR for packaging program, it must be in conjunction with a strong Bottle Bill. **Maryland should pass both programs because they will complement each other.**

Forgoing the development of a Bottle Bill program in favor of an EPR for packaging program – even if it includes beverage containers – because that will result in several negative consequences, such as:

- (1) **Elimination of litter reduction benefits associated with Bottle Bills:** When beverage containers are part of an EPR for Packaging Program, you do not get the refundable deposit on each container. As a result, consumers do not have an economic incentive to hold on to their containers for recycling. This means the containers are likely to continue to get littered and discarded, rather than recycled.
- (2) **Lowered quality of recycled material from beverage containers:** The containers that are currently captured through Maryland's recycling system are commingled with other recyclables. This commingling increases contamination, lowering the quality and value of the containers making it harder to recycle them. This is true even when the system is enhanced through an EPR for Packaging Program. A Bottle Bill will remove these containers by processing them through a separate recycling system which maximizes value and recyclability.

²⁰ Bryna Zumer, [Stop Littering! Trash on state roads cost MD Taxpayers \\$39M in 5 Years](#), Fox News (Dec. 3, 2021).

²¹ [SB 901](#), 2025 Leg., 447th Sess. (Md. 2025).



- (3) **Lowered recycling rates for all packaging materials:** One of the key goals of an EPR for packaging program is to develop new ways to collect and manage hard to recycle materials. If a state does not have a Bottle Bill, EPR programs must divert precious resources to manage beverage containers rather than focusing on addressing other, more problematic packaging. There is already evidence of the higher recycling rates for packaging achieved through enacting a Bottle Bill.²² States with Bottle Bill recycle 34% of packaging, compared to 7% in non-Bottle Bill states.²³

IV. Conclusion

The time to act is now. This bill will improve recycling, create green jobs, and reduce litter which will protect Maryland's land, rivers, lakes, and oceans. With SB 346, Maryland can create a robust and effective Bottle Bill program that will protect the environment and strengthen the economy. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Blair, Esq.
Policy and Advocacy Director
Just Zero

²² Eunomia, The 50 States of Recycling: a State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates, 6. (Dec. 2023).

²³ *Id.*

SB 346 - Bottle Bill-Support-Phil Webster-UULM-MD

Uploaded by: Phil Webster

Position: FAV



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.
DATE: February 18, 2025

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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Testimony in support of SB0346 - Maryland Beverage

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

02/18/2025

Richard Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0346 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

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 SB0346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

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 the use of plastic bottles. It implements a program to deal with recycling of those bottles and reduction of litter from 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.¹

NPR reported “The plastic problem isn't your fault, but you can be part of the solution.”² 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#0346.

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

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

SB 346_Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home_FAV.

Uploaded by: Robert Simon

Position: FAV



Hearing before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
February 18, 2025

**Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on
SB 346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based upon, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation and respect for all life. MCCH is a grassroots voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics. In the 2024 Legislative Session, 570 Maryland Catholics from 22 different Catholic parishes and religious communities across the State joined together through MCCH to support several key environmental bills under consideration by the General Assembly. MCCH is independent, though, and should be distinguished as an organization from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy positions of the bishops who lead these three dioceses.

MCCH would like to express its strong support for the passage of Senate Bill 346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

We see it on our highways, byways, city streets, county roads, pastures, fields, and woods. We see it in our waterways, streams, and creeks. Discarded aluminum cans, plastic, and glass bottles are everywhere. It contaminates our soil, wastes needed resources, and—if not dumped there already—the litter eventually flows to our treasured Chesapeake Bay and then into our ocean. It is a threat to our human health and to wildlife. The plastic beverage containers break up into small pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Scientists estimate that humans are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of microplastics weekly. And then there is the intangible harm. The dumping of trash reinforces the philosophy that those who are able can engage in excessive consumerism and waste resources without any regard to the effect it has on others. Something must be done.

As Maryland Catholics, when advocating for the care of our common home, we are guided by the words of Pope Francis. In his 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*,¹ the Pope states "Political activity on the local level could also be directed to modifying consumption, developing an economy of waste disposal and recycling." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 180) Further, "Efforts to promote a sustainable use of natural resources are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits in the medium term." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 191). In this connection, he specifically mentions "intelligent and profitable ways of reusing, revamping, and recycling." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 192)

¹ The English text of the encyclical, to which the paragraph numbers in the following parentheses refer, can be found at:
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

In his 2023 apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum*², Pope Francis observes “Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family and community habits are changing is ... helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society” (*Laudate Deum*, no. 71).

Senate Bill 346 is responsive to the Pope’s observations and recommendations. When enacted, it will respond to the current waste of resources resulting from the trashing of most of the 5.5 billion beverage containers annually sold in Maryland. The bill will also produce numerous benefits to our economy, environment, and health. Some of these benefits include:

- Capturing 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, thereby increasing the rate of recycling in the state from 25 percent of containers to more than 90 percent.
- Increasing the availability of high-quality recycled feedstock, as the program under this bill is projected to generate annually 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.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions—231,707 metric tons of CO₂-equivalent air emissions would be eliminated each year, as a result of not having to produce new cans and bottles from virgin materials. This is comparable to removing the emissions of over 50,000 cars.
- Benefitting taxpayers and local governments, as they currently pay for disposal of beverage containers in our landfills and incinerators. These costs will be reduced because beverage containers will be diverted from landfills and incinerators. The program under this bill is self-financing. Fees from beverage producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties will finance the costs of collection and processing of beverage containers by a nonprofit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization, not by local governments.
- Creating jobs through investments in new refillable and reusable beverage container systems. The recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration.³
- Improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and other local waterways, where beverage containers account for a substantial proportion of the volume of trash polluting these waterways—trash that degrades both the God-given beauty and ecosystem health of our streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.⁴

Senate Bill 346 builds on the proven success of similar programs in other states and can lead to a positive cultural change. Currently 10 states covering 90 million people have successful recycling programs.⁵ When consumers receive cash for empty beverage containers, there is an incentive not to litter. This incentive over time can become part of the tapestry of our culture. As Pope Francis noted in the above quote from *Laudate Deum*, personal changes (such as recycling empty bottle containers) can lead to positive cultural changes and transformation.

At one time Maryland had a bottle refund program. Now is the time to bring back the bottle bill and begin to realize the environmental, health, economic, and cultural benefits it will bring.

For these reasons we strongly urge your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 346.

² The English text of this apostolic exhortation, to which the paragraph numbers in the parentheses refer, can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html.

³ Maryland Sierra Club, “Maryland Needs a Bottle Bill! HB 232/SB 346” [Fact Sheet], 2025.

⁴ According to the Anacostia Watershed Society, beverage containers are more than half of the trash by volume captured in the Anacostia watershed’s trash traps.

⁵ California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont. Redemption rates in 2021 ranged from 50 percent to 89 percent. There are currently 72 container deposit programs worldwide in 61 countries. Increased interest in the past decade has been fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. Susan Collins, “International Embrace,” *Plastics Recycling Update*, Winter 2020, pp. 38-43.

FAV_ SB346 - Bottle Deposit .pdf

Uploaded by: Robin Broder

Position: FAV



February 14, 2025

SB346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE

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

Waterkeepers Chesapeake and the below signed organizations respectfully request a FAVORABLE report on SB346 which establishes a long-overdue beverage container recycling refund and litter reduction program in the state of Maryland.

Bottle trash, particularly plastic, is a pervasive blight in our waterways, posing a serious threat to the environment and aquatic life. As plastic breaks down into microplastics and nanoplastics, it further contaminates the environment, creating long-term ecological damage. This pollution doesn't just affect wildlife - it enters the human food chain through the consumption of contaminated seafood, and bioaccumulates in our brains at an alarming rate.¹ **Enacting a bottle deposit bill is crucial to reducing plastic waste and protecting both our environment and public health.**

The Anacostia River and Baltimore Harbor are two of the few waterways in the United States with a waterway listed as "impaired" under the federal Clean Water Act for trash, and an accompanying Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or "pollution diet" for trash. **This means that trash is so prevalent in the watersheds that feed into the Anacostia River and Baltimore Harbor that the rivers aren't meeting water quality standards and that significant efforts are necessary to stop the damage and heal our waterways.** Establishing a state-wide beverage container deposit program would reduce the amount of trash that enters the waste stream in the first place, and would ultimately lead to cleaner, healthier waterways in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and beyond.

Even when beverage containers are properly discarded instead of being littered, their disposal can contribute to the compounding harms that disproportionately impact

¹ Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains. Nature Medicine. Nihart et al. February 3, 2025. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03453-1>

historically disenfranchised and overburdened communities. Maryland's CY2021 recycling rate was 42.46%, but that rate is highly variable by county and ranges from 62% in Prince George's County to 5% in Somerset County.² The remainder of the waste generated in Maryland is buried in landfills or burned in incinerators, which exacerbates the environmental injustices shouldered by lower-income residents across the state.

A beverage container deposit program is a common-sense and proven strategy to reduce litter, increase recycling rates, and incentivize environmental stewardship by turning trash into treasure with a fully-refundable deposit on plastic, glass, and metal bottles. Ten states in the US have already paved the way for this type of program in Maryland, and the results are clear; states with bottle deposit programs are achieving recycling rates of up to 65%, which is significantly higher than both Maryland's rate and the national average of 32%.³⁴

The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program will create a statewide deposit refund program for single use beverage containers similar to successful programs that already exist in other states. This will increase the monetary value of these bottles, which will therefore keep them out of our incinerators and landfills because people will be incentivized to recycle them properly.

This bill will result in:

- **Less trash** in our streets, streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.
- Fewer plastic, glass, and metal bottles going to Maryland's incinerators, which means **cleaner air and less pollution** in our environment.
- **More space** in our landfills.
- **Reduced strain on public waste management** with a system that removes beverage containers from the municipal waste stream.

For all of the reasons outlined above, Waterkeepers Chesapeake and the below signed organizations urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB346

Sincerely,

Robin Broder, Acting Executive Director
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
robin@waterkeeperschesapeake.org

² County Recyclables by Commodity in Tons for CY21. Compiled by the Maryland Department of the Environment from Reports Submitted for CY21.
<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/Documents/County%20Commodity%20CY21.pdf>

³ The 50 States of Recycling. A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates, pp. 15-17. December 2023. Eunomia Research & Consulting Inc.

⁴ National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Last updated on November 8, 2024.
<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>

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Feldman_SB 346_02142025.pdf

Uploaded by: Sheila McDonald

Position: FAV



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

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February 12, 2025

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

Re: SB 346 Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman:

It is shocking to learn that billions—not millions—of beverage containers are sold in Maryland each year, and most are not recycled even though recycling options are widespread. These containers clutter our roadways and rivers and threaten our health. It is time for Maryland to implement a container deposit program that will significantly reduce litter and increase re-use and recycling of containers.

Container deposit programs have increased recycling and reduced waste, and the City Council voted unanimously to support SB 346. This bill creates an effective system that will benefit the State by recycling most of the billions of containers used in Maryland every year. It will also significantly reduce litter and tipping fees that localities pay to bury materials that should be recycled. These benefits can be accomplished without high costs to the State.

Please support this legislation and pass it favorably in the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

Sincerely,

Fazlul Kabir
Mayor

cc: Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Jim Rosapepe, District 21

SB 346

Uploaded by: Susan Buyer

Position: FAV



Indivisible Worcester Maryland

<http://indivisibleworcestermd.org>

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admin@indivisibleworcestermd.org

Susan Buyer and Toby Perkins
Coordinators

Testimony for Maryland State Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee on SB 346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill

Indivisible Worcester MD strongly supports SB 346, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would add a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit Stewardship Organization, not by Maryland residents. The Maryland Department of the Environment will provide strong oversight.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it would capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, diverting an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing pollution from littered plastic bottles that break down in the environment and get washed into the Chesapeake Bay. Recent polling has found that more than 90% of Maryland's voting public would support the Bottle Bill.

We urge you to support SB 346, to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, provide cleaner parks and waterways, and create savings for municipalities and local taxpayers.

Susan P. Buyer and Toby J. Perkins
Coordinators, Indivisible Worcester MD
11621 Twin Oaks Drive, Berlin MD 21811
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<https://indivisibleworcestermd.org/>
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CRI Supports MD SB346 2-14-25 .pdf

Uploaded by: Susan Collins

Position: FAV

February 14, 2025

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

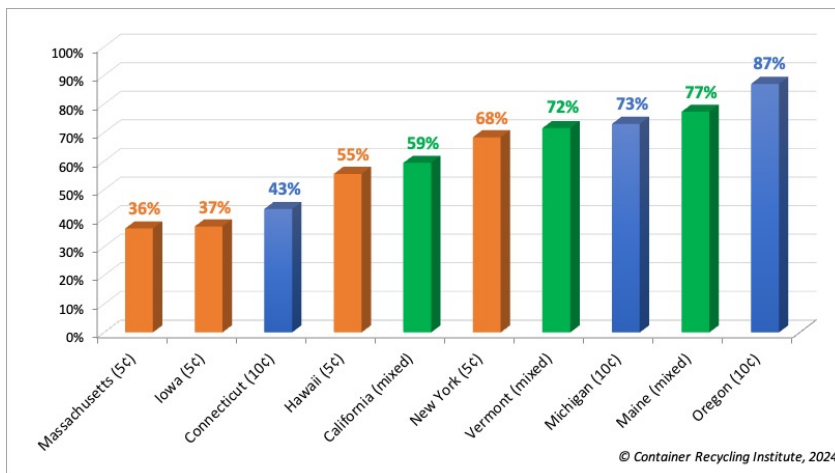
We are writing in support of Senate Bill 346, “Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program,” a bill that would establish a beverage container deposit program in Maryland.

We applaud the bill for:

1. Incorporating most beverage types into the proposed deposit-refund program (DRS), including **wine and liquor**. Doing so will generate clean, high-quality glass that is desired by glass manufacturers, and will help alleviate the pressure that the state has been experiencing to find aggregate uses for glass collected through municipal programs.
2. Including a **wide scope of beverage containers**, as per the definition.
3. Specifying a **deposit of 10¢ for containers less than or equal to 24 fluid ounces and 15¢ for containers more than 24 ounces**, with options to increase the refund value in the future.
4. Including **robust performance targets** as well as a description of the penalties for not completing these targets.

Ten cents is a strong financial incentive for people to return containers rather than throw them in the trash or litter them. Michigan and Oregon, the two U.S. states with dime deposits, have achieved much higher redemption rates—73% and 87% respectively in 2024—than the deposit states with 5¢ deposits (where reported redemption rates range from 38% to 72%). When consumers who purchased the drinks do not

10 Deposit States Redemption Rates with Deposit Amounts



take bottles and cans in for refunds themselves, there are always other people and groups ready to do the redemption for them to generate income.

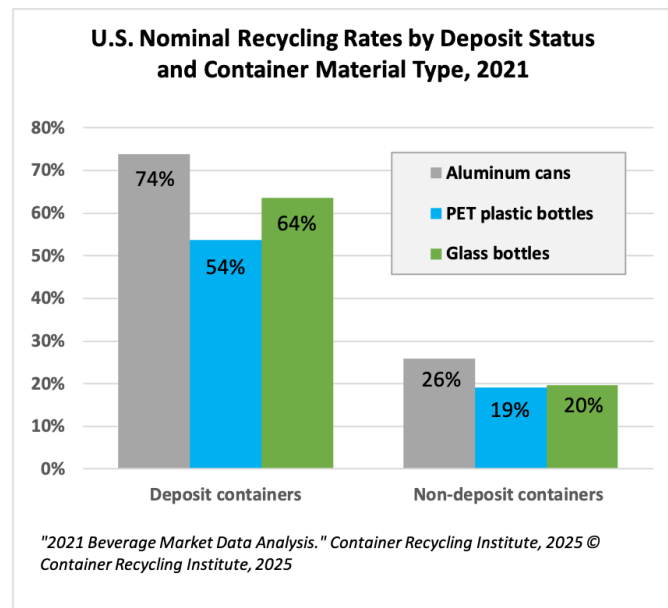
For more than 50 years, beverage container deposit refund laws have been successful in achieving recycling rates that are up to 3 times higher than those of bottles and cans without deposits. As the graphic below shows, about three quarters (74%) of aluminum cans with a deposit were recycled nationwide in 2021, in contrast to just 26% of cans lacking a deposit. The differences for bottles are more pronounced: 54% vs. 19% for non-deposit PET plastic, and 64% vs. 20% for non-deposit glass.

Increasing beverage sales nationwide has led to burgeoning bottle and can waste.

Based on national statistics, CRI estimates that 79% of the 5.5 billion beverage bottles and cans sold in Maryland in 2021 were wasted: littered, landfilled, or incinerated. That level of consumption and wasting represents a significant burden on taxpayers: whether through city-run recycling programs or municipally-contracted trash pick-up and disposal.

Deposits have multiple benefits, including:

- **Achieving higher recycling rates** than municipal programs alone.
- **Transferring** the financial and operational responsibility for recycling from taxpayers and ratepayers to the producers of disposable beverage containers.
- **Adding value to local and regional economies** through the sale and processing of scrap materials.
- **Avoiding greenhouse gas emissions and reducing energy use** by displacing virgin materials in manufacturing.
- **Reducing litter** that is expensive for public and private entities to clean up, that causes injuries to people and domestic animals, and that adds to harmful ocean plastic waste.
- **Promoting job growth**; it is estimated that there are more than 20,000 jobs resulting from the existing deposit return systems in the 10 states where the law exists.



Beverage container deposit programs are extremely popular – a recent public opinion poll by Gonzales Research and Media Services found that **90%** of Maryland voters would support a deposit return system in the state.

If Maryland were to pass this DRS bill, CRI estimates that the state would recycle **3.4 billion additional containers annually—or just over 210,000 tons of metal, glass, plastic and paper—**

over and above the recycling currently taking place. By reducing the need to make new bottles and cans from virgin materials, this additional recycling would eliminate about 239,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions: ***an amount equivalent to taking almost 52,000 cars off the road for a year.***

We are optimistic that there will be strong markets for deposit containers generated in Maryland, in part because multiple global beverage brands have made public announcements about increasing their use of recycled materials, as the below table shows.

Selected plastics reduction commitments by global brands		
Company	Timeframe	Commitment or target
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Equivalent of 100% of containers collected and recycled
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Average 50% recycled content in bottles
Danone	by 2025	100% of packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable
McDonald's	by 2025	100% of guest packaging from renewable, recycled or certified sources
Kraft Heinz	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable, reusable or compostable
Nestlé	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable or reusable
Reprinted from CRI's Winter 2018 newsletter		
© Container Recycling Institute, 2018		

These lofty goals can only be met through the increased availability of high-quality beverage bottles and cans for use as feedstock in new containers. Deposit programs consistently generate such high-quality bottles and cans. For example, deposit-grade PET bottles have recently had a value of 21.13¢ per pound, ***twice the value of non-deposit, curbside PET*** (10.47¢ per pound).

Deposits on beverage containers are now available to more than 553 million people worldwide. With the announcement of multiple new deposit laws in 2023 and 2024 (including Poland, Singapore, England, Northern Ireland, and Spain), it is expected that more than **800 million people will have access to deposit programs by 2027**. This trend is projected to continue as more nations realize that deposits are a vital part of the solution to the problem of bottle and can waste and plastic pollution.

In sum, CRI supports the passage of a beverage container deposit law in Maryland. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Susan Collins
President, Container Recycling Institute

***About the Container Recycling Institute:** CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging.*

SB346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refu

Uploaded by: Tom Taylor

Position: FAV

February 14, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB346, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Favorable

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

As a community volunteer actively engaged in efforts to reduce waste and protect our waterways, I am greatly saddened by the amount of litter -- so much of it beverage containers -- that I see constantly on my walks in public areas and near waterways.

In volunteering with stream cleanup events, I have been struck by the large amount of beverage containers that we have removed from the water and stream banks.

I am aware of the many negative environmental impacts that all this waste causes. Plastic beverage containers pollute our waterways and pose a threat to wildlife and human health. They break up into small pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Scientists estimate that humans are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic weekly.

More than 4 billion containers a year, 2.6 billion of which are plastic, are left in the environment -- in waterways, on roadsides, in landfills -- or are burned in air-pollution-causing incinerators.

Therefore, I strongly support this legislation because of the success of similar programs in other states, and because of the many benefits it will offer for Maryland:

- Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution, and an increase in water quality.
- A dramatic increase in Maryland's beverage container recycling rate. The recycling rate is currently only 25% of the more than 5 billion containers sold in the state each year.
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Savings for taxpayers and local governments.
- Job creation. Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration.

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing waste. Ten states have longstanding, successful programs. Deposit programs also dramatically increase beverage container recycling. The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is 2-3 times higher than for containers not subject to a deposit, and the benefit is greater with higher deposits.

I strongly urge a favorable vote on SB346 as strong legislation to support environmental sustainability, benefit the health of people and wildlife, and reduce litter.

Please give a favorable vote on SB346.

Sincerely,
Tom Taylor
11-G Laurel Hill Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770
301-513-9524

SB346-2025-MML-SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Tyler Brice

Position: FWA



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 18, 2025

Committee: Senate - Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill: SB 346 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Support with Amendment

Reason for Position:

On behalf of the Maryland Municipal League (MML), representing 161 local governments across the state, we respectfully submit this testimony in **support of SB 346 and request that the following amendment be added to the bill.** We believe that this amendment is critical to ensure that municipalities retain full autonomy over their waste management operations while the state assumes responsibility for locating redemption facilities in a manner that is both transparent and objective and has shared this amendment with the bill sponsor. We request the inclusion of the following amendment:

Amendment – Section 9-1757.4

- (a) The Department of the Environment shall determine the locations for redemption facilities based on objective criteria, including but not limited to geographic accessibility, service efficiency, economic viability, and environmental impact, with the purpose of optimizing statewide operation of the beverage container redemption program.
- (b) No municipality shall be required, as a condition of the beverage container redemption program, to host, operate, or provide land, facilities, or any other resources for the establishment or operation of any redemption facility.
- (c) Prior to finalizing the locations of redemption facilities, the Department shall consult with affected municipalities to consider any potential impacts on municipal services and existing recycling programs, and to ensure that the selected sites do not impose undue burdens on local jurisdictions.
- (d) The Department is authorized to enter into agreements with private or other state-operated entities for the establishment and operation of redemption facilities, thereby preserving municipal autonomy over local waste management and recycling operations.

Cont.

The Maryland Municipal League uses its collective voice to advocate, empower and protect the interests of our 160 local governments members and elevates local leadership, delivers impactful solutions for our communities, and builds an inclusive culture for the 2 million Marylanders we serve.



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

This amendment is essential because it clarifies that the state, through the Department of the Environment, will be solely responsible for the strategic placement of redemption facilities using clear, objective criteria. It expressly ensures that municipalities are not burdened with hosting or operating these facilities, thereby protecting local resources and allowing municipal governments to continue focusing on their existing waste collection and recycling programs. We strongly believe that this balanced approach will enhance the effectiveness of the beverage container redemption program while safeguarding the operational integrity and financial viability of municipal recycling efforts. For further inquiries or additional information, please contact Tyler Alexis Brice, Manager of Advocacy and Public Affairs, at tylerb@mdmunicipal.org or 254-652-8110.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to continued collaboration in advancing Maryland's environmental priorities.

The Maryland Municipal League uses its collective voice to advocate, empower and protect the interests of our 160 local governments members and elevates local leadership, delivers impactful solutions for our communities, and builds an inclusive culture for the 2 million Marylanders we serve.

47 State Circle, Suite 403 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(410) 295-9100 www.md MUNICIPAL.org

MRN25SB346CDWrittendocx.pdf

Uploaded by: Chaz Miller

Position: UNF



February 18, 2025

To: Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Re: SB346 Beverage Container Deposits
Oppose

Maryland Recycling Network's 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 strongly support more recycling in our state. We agree that litter is a serious problem and that beverage containers are a highly visible form of litter. Container deposits will decrease that litter source and increase beverage container recycling. However, as written, it will impose collateral damage on Maryland's Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs – the facilities that process curbside recyclables) causing a loss of revenue and higher operating costs. Local governments that depend on both public and private MRFs to process their recyclables will bear the burden of these higher costs.

We appreciate the language which recognizes this damage and attempts to address it (see section 9-1748). We believe that it does not accurately reflect the negative impact removing valuable recyclables currently being processed at both public and private MRFs on behalf of local governments. While these containers represent about 5 percent of the overall recyclables processed by publicly and privately owned MRFs, they represent an invaluable revenue stream which can supply one-third or more of MRF revenue (see, for instance, a study on the contribution of aluminum beverage cans to recycling programs (see, for instance, from the Can Manufacturers Institute "Aluminum Beverage Can: Driver of the U.S. Recycling System" June, 2020).

We would also note that while this section attempts to offset lost revenues and higher costs for local government programs, including Maryland's four publicly-owned MRFs, it makes no attempt to do the same for the three privately-owned MRFs in our state. Their processing costs will go up and their revenue will go down with no relief. This includes a new MRF, costing over \$50 million to build, opening soon in Howard County. This is unfair and will harm the local governments who rely on them.

In light of these concerns, we cannot support SB346 at this time. We hope to work with the bill's authors to resolve these concerns.

The Maryland Recycling Network is a resource for legislators and others interested in recycling and waste reduction. Please do not hesitate to contact us via email 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.

Chaz Miller
Chair, MRN Legislative Committee

Maryland Recycling Network
c/o Mariner Management • PO Box 1640 • Columbia, MD 21044 Phone:
(443) 741-8740 • www.MarylandRecyclingNetwork.org

SB0346_UNF_NWRA_MD Beverage Container Recycling Re

Uploaded by: Drew Vetter

Position: UNF



Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 18, 2025

Senate Bill 346 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA-MD) is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. NWRA-MD and its members oppose Senate Bill 346.

Senate Bill 346 proposes to establish a statewide beverage container recycling refund and litter reduction program. While we appreciate the sponsor's intent to increase the percentage of beverage containers recycled in the State and reduce litter, the unintended negative impacts of such a program on Maryland's existing recycling infrastructure outweigh any potential benefit.

Bottle bill expansions present an economic and disruptive burden to both recycling markets and local taxpayers. Requiring consumers to transport and deposit their recyclables at collection facilities removes up to 50 percent of plastics and aluminum from recycling streams. Reducing these valuable commodities increases curbside recycling costs for customers and municipalities. It may also threaten public and private recycling facilities, forcing them to cut jobs or shut down due to revenue loss.

Passing a bottle bill in Maryland will create duplication in the State's recycling process. Recycling technologies have advanced significantly since bottle bills were first adopted around the United States. Under a bottle bill, there would be two redundant recycling systems: a bottle bill system that recovers a limited percentage of the recycling stream and material recovery facilities (MRFs) that recover all other recyclables. Materials considered under the bottle bill expansion are already being recycled by MRFs. Solutions are needed for hard-to-recycle materials MRFs cannot process (i.e. film plastic, flexible pouches, toys, carpets, tires, textiles, mattresses, solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, and appliances).

Maryland residents would pay for two recycling systems under this proposal: a per-container fee under the expanded bottle bill system and a residential curbside or drop-off service for solid waste and recycling. They will also be directly impacted by additional costs: an upfront container deposit and potentially higher prices for consumer goods as producers pass along their handling costs. States initially adopted bottle bills as litter abatement programs before curbside recycling was commonplace. They are used by just ten states as jurisdictions have adopted curbside recycling as a more effective method of managing and promoting recycling.

We note that while the bill recognizes that local government recycling programs will lose revenue as materials are diverted and attempts to provide an offset for that revenue loss. There is not a similar offset for Maryland's three privately owned MRFs, which will experience the same revenue loss and will harm the local governments that rely on them.

Implementing a bottle bill in Maryland will harm recycling because the containers targeted for the expansion are currently being managed effectively in local recycling programs. They are key items in the recycling bin that have a positive commodity value. The value of those containers helps underwrite the

cost of delivering everyone's recycling services. Without these valuable recyclable containers in the general recyclables stream, the cost to municipalities, and ultimately Maryland resident taxpayers, to continue their recycling programs will assuredly go up. For these reasons, we respectfully request an **unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 346.

For more information:

Andrew G. Vetter

J. Steven Wise

Danna L. Kauffman

410-244-7000

SB346 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Kirk McCauley

Position: UNF



WMDA/CAR Service Station
and Automotive Repair Association

Chair: Brian J Feldman, Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan and members of Education, Energy, and Environmental Committee

RE: SB346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction program

Position: Unfavorable

My name is Kirk McCauley, my employer is WMDA/CAR, we represent service stations convenience stores and repair facilities across the state as a non- profit trade group.

We have county recycling centers now and I would think by enhancing what we already have, would a cost effective way to accomplish recycling goal.

Currently consumers and small business are struggling, and state is not doing very well in financial department. Now is not the time to add cost of a massive start up program that will not only be expensive but invite consumers to carry bags of mostly empty products into stores for employees to sort. This creates problems and unsanitary conditions.

Raise the cost of products if you must but find a better way to recover empty containers.

We ask for unfavorable vote.

Any questions can be addressed to Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or kmccauley@wmda.net

SB346_RestaurantAssoc_Thompson_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Melvin Thompson

Position: UNF



SENATE BILL 346

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

February 18, 2025

Position: Unfavorable

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Education, Energy & Environment Committee:

The Restaurant Association of Maryland opposes SB 346. This legislation would require beverage distributors to include a redeemable beverage container refund value as part of the wholesale price of beverage containers sold to restaurants, bars, and other retailers. The legislation prohibits restaurants, bars and other “on-premises sellers” from including the refund value of redeemable beverage containers in the retail price when sold to customers.

Despite language in the bill that allows on-premises sellers to arrange for pickup of empty redeemable beverage containers (with refunds and materials handling fee paid) by a beverage container stewardship organization or via bag drops, many questions remain about the related logistics for on-premises sellers. Convenient redemption options for on-premises sellers located in less-populated areas of the state could be limited. Moreover, restaurants and bars in locations with limited outside storage space (such as downtown/city areas) or in properties with shared disposal facilities (e.g., shopping centers, malls, sports/entertainment venues, the airport, etc.) would face challenges separately storing their beverage containers for pickup and ensuring that the correct on-premises seller receives the refunds.

In 2023, the General Assembly enacted legislation (SB 222) that requires the Maryland Department of Environment to hire a consultant to conduct a statewide recycling needs assessment. This law also established an advisory council to study and make recommendations for implementing a producer responsibility program for packaging materials. We are still awaiting the release of these reports. We believe it would be prudent for the General Assembly to wait until after the release of these reports before giving serious consideration to any other recycling-related policy.

For these reasons, we oppose SB 346 and request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melvin R. Thompson".

Melvin R. Thompson
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy

SB346_MAPDA_unf (2025).pdf

Uploaded by: Mike O'Halloran

Position: UNF



Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association
P.O. Box 711 ★ Annapolis, MD 21404
410-693-2226 ★ www.mapda.com

TO: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

FROM: Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association

DATE: February 18, 2025

RE: **SENATE BILL 346** – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

On behalf of Maryland's convenience stores and energy distributors, MAPDA urges the committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB346.

This legislation would require retailers, such as convenience stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business and pay out the return fee. Additionally, the retailers would be at the forefront of having to charge customers a significant product increase at the cash register.

Border issues drive up costs and hurt local economies. A container deposit represents a significant price increase, especially for less expensive products. That value creates unintended consequences that include fraudulent redemption of containers and loss of business.

Our locations are not made for a deposit scheme. Although there is an exemption for smaller locations it is not reflective of the layout and size of the emerging convenience store market, as the neighborhood convenience store has evolved into the local grocery store providing a host of products from fresh fruits, eggs, and a variety of beverage offerings. The requirement for dedicated space of dirty and used beverage containers, the evaluation of valid container returns, and the responsibility to payout money on products likely not purchased in the store makes this legislation unworkable and unsustainable in a small business environment.

There is an easier way to recycle. Recycling systems should focus on all recyclables – be easy, convenient, and equitable for all. The deposit system does not meet any of those important components.

For these reasons, MAPDA respectfully requests an unfavorable committee report on SB346.

Feeding and fueling the economy through gas, coffee, food, heating oil and propane.

MAPDA is an association of convenience stores and energy distributors in Maryland, Delaware & the District of Columbia.

2025 MBWA SB 346 Beverage Container Recycling Refun

Uploaded by: NICK MANIS

Position: UNF



February 18, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Room 2 W. Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Re: **OPPOSE - SB 346**– Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Beer Wholesalers Association (MBWA) we are writing in opposition to **SB 346** which requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish a beverage container deposit program.

The MBWA consists of 22 Maryland businesses employing over 1,400 Maryland citizens that are majority owned and operated generational family businesses. Our members are committed to recycling and reducing litter in Maryland. The policy discussions around recycling and solid waste disposal are important ones and are taking place here and around the country. We recognize the importance of the issue and are proud of the steps we have taken to recycle all the material in our warehouse and business and encourage our customers to do the same.

There is a better way to recycle and reduce litter than implementing a program that costs consumers more at the cash register, historically is plagued with fraud, and most notably, imposes significant operational changes and costs to MBWA members and our retail customers.

We look forward to the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) Needs Assessment report and we are committed to working with you and other stakeholders to develop a recycling system that addresses all recyclable materials. Additionally, Maryland has not had a statewide anti-litter campaign in over 35 years. Litter campaigns can be very effective with the development of a committed public-private partnership. MBWA would welcome participation in an anti-litter campaign should the Maryland Department of Transportation and/or MDE establish a stakeholder group to develop and execute such a program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Manis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nicholas G. Manis
Executive Director

CC: John Favazza

SB0346_UNF_MSLBA_MD Beverage Container Recycling R

Uploaded by: Steve Wise

Position: UNF



**MARYLAND STATE
LICENSED BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION**

150 E Main Street, Suite 104, Westminster, MD 21157

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 18, 2025

Senate Bill 346 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association (MSLBA), which consists of approximately 850 Maryland businesses holding alcoholic beverage licenses (restaurants, bars, taverns and package stores), opposes Senate Bill 346.

This legislation would require retailers, such as package stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business, either by establishing a “dedicated area” to store the returned containers or acquiring a reverse vending machine. In addition, they must pay the person redeeming the container in cash in some cases.

The package stores owned by our members are typically 3,000 to 5,000 square feet in size. The majority of this square footage is dedicated to shelving, sales and consumer transactions, coolers, walk-in boxes, and storage area for product that has yet to be put on the shelf. Senate Bill 346 would require each retailer to set aside either dedicated storage space or an area for a reverse vending machine. These stores are simply not equipped to accommodate storage of redeemable containers, and the space needed to do so would be substantial, considering that a retailer must accept any containers that are brought in, unless they are rejected due to their condition.

Furthermore, Chapter 465 of 2023 required that the Maryland Department of the Environment conduct a recycling needs assessment before July of 2024. This assessment has still not been finalized. It would seem prudent to allow that study to be completed and considered before the General Assembly moves forward with legislation implementing a beverage container recycling plan.

For these reasons, MSLBA respectfully requests that the Committee give this legislation an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Andrew G. Vetter
410-244-7000

SB 346 Deposits - Information.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenna Sublett

Position: INFO



To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

From: Tiffany Harvey
On behalf of the MD-DE-DC Beverage Association

Date: February 18, 2025

Re: SB 346 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Challenges with this Legislation

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on SB 346.

Our companies believe that to be effective, a collection system for recyclables needs to be convenient to consumers, efficient, financially stable, and help companies gain increased access to recycled material so it can be remade into new products. This legislation does not meet these pillars of a good recycling policy.

The policy conversation around recycling, plastic reduction and solid waste disposal is an important one and one taking place around the country. Our industry recognizes the seriousness of this issue, and we welcome the opportunity to work with communities on ideas that get back more of our plastic bottles so they can be remade into new bottles.

In 2023 the Maryland General Assembly passed Senate Bill 222, which set the stage for the establishment of an Extended Producer Responsibility system in Maryland. A system that will include our beverage bottles and other recyclables and packaging materials. We are committed to the passage of a strong EPR system in Maryland, one that we hope this Committee will consider in the coming weeks.

Maryland is home to four manufacturing facilities and twenty distribution facilities. The development of both systems simultaneously will have untested cost implications for our companies, the distribution system, retailers and consumers. We do not support the parallel establishment of a deposit system and an EPR system. A strong and sustainable EPR system must include our beverage packaging. Pulling out beverage bottles into a separate and distinct system does not make sense.

Additionally, Maryland has not had a statewide anti-litter campaign in over 35 years. Litter campaigns can be very effective with the development of a committed public-private partnership. Our Association would welcome participation in an anti-litter campaign. We encourage the Maryland Department of Transportation and/or MDE to establish a stakeholder group to develop and execute such a program.

In closing, you have our commitment to be at the table and to participate in best practice discussions or a new direction conversation – particularly when talking about our packaging.

MDE SB346 INF.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy D. Baker

Position: INFO



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

SB 346

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Informational

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Date: February 18, 2025

From: Leslie Gray, Government Relations Officer

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers the following **INFORMATIONAL** testimony on Senate Bill 346.

SB 346 would establish a Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to address the collection and redemption of beverage containers sold in the state. MDE would be required to oversee the program and enforce seller and distributor registration requirements and container disposal prohibitions.

MDE appreciates the intent of the bill to divert beverage containers from the waste stream but believes in a comprehensive solution through the Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Program (EPR). The majority of states with successful bottle deposit programs have had them in place for decades, before using Producer Responsibility Organizations (PRO) became the preferred method for EPR. Maryland is currently pursuing an EPR framework based on the work of the Producer Responsibility Advisory Council, which would align with national best practices and allow MDE to focus its efforts on program oversight.

MDE hopes that the information regarding SB 346 is helpful, and is available for questions.

Contact: Leslie Gray, Government Relations Officer
Email: leslie.gray@maryland.gov