



Maryland Youth Advisory Council  
c/o Governor's Office Children  
100 Community Place,  
Crownsville, MD 21032

Alexander Hossainkhail, *Chair*  
Thomas Evans, *Vice-Chair*  
Folashade Epebinu, *Secretary*

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Re: HB 277 | Water Bottle Filling Stations in Certain New Constructions and Renovations

Dear Chair Marc Korman and the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council prides itself on being a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders who serve as a voice for youth in the state of Maryland. As leaders in our communities, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness, and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers regarding issues facing young people.

HB 277 mandates the installation of water bottle filling stations in certain new constructions and renovations across Maryland. This legislation is a crucial step toward promoting environmental sustainability, public health, and accessibility to clean drinking water in our state.

First and foremost, the implementation of water bottle filling stations aligns with Maryland's commitment to reducing plastic waste and promoting environmental responsibility. Disposable plastic bottles contribute significantly to landfill waste and pollution in our waterways. The ease of use towards reusable water bottles ultimately decreases plastic consumption and its harmful impact on the environment.

Beyond its environmental benefits, this legislation will also have positive public health implications. Providing *updated* clean, filtered, and chilled water in schools, public buildings, and other facilities ensures that Maryland residents, including students and employees, have access to safe drinking water. Proper hydration is essential for cognitive function, overall health, and productivity. Additionally, by modernizing drinking water access points, this bill will help prevent the spread of germs, as touchless filling stations reduce the need for direct contact compared to traditional drinking fountains.

From an economic standpoint, investing in water bottle filling stations leads to long-term cost savings for individuals and institutions alike. With more readily available refill stations, people are less likely to purchase single-use bottled water, reducing expenses over time. Schools and public institutions will also benefit from decreased costs associated with waste management and disposal of plastic bottles.

Finally, this bill ensures equitable access to clean drinking water for all Maryland residents. As renovations and new construction projects move forward, it is imperative that we incorporate infrastructure that reflects our values of sustainability, public health, and accessibility. By doing so, HB 277 advances equitable access to resources and fosters a healthier, more environmentally responsible state.

The Council has voted in favor of endorsing HB 277, as it aligns with the Council's Legislative Platform supporting:

- Public health and safety initiatives that foster well-being for all youth.
- Environmental sustainability efforts that protect Maryland's natural resources for current and future generations

For these reasons, the Maryland Youth Advisory Council respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 277. We thank you for considering this essential legislation and for your commitment to improving the lives of youth and all residents across Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Hossainkhail". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alex" being more prominent than the last name "Hossainkhail".

Alex Hossainkhail  
Chair, Maryland Youth Advisory Council