



Testimony in Support of HOUSE BILL 277/ SB00096: Environment – Water Bottle Filling Stations – Requirement

February 5, 2025

Maryland General Assembly – Environment and Transportation Committee

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

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

Refill and Refresh

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

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

Chair Korman Vice Chair Boyce and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. My name is Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, and I am here today to strongly support HOUSE BILL 277, which mandates the installation of water bottle filling stations in new construction and certain renovations across Maryland. This forward-thinking legislation is a critical step toward achieving our state's climate goals, enhancing public health, and ensuring a more sustainable and cost-effective future for Maryland.

Advancing Maryland's Climate Goals

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

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

Fiscal Benefits for Maryland's Budget

HB 277 is not only an environmental imperative but also a sound fiscal investment. The

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

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

Positioning Maryland as a Leader in Sustainability

By passing HB 277, Maryland has an opportunity to position itself as a leader in sustainability and innovation. States across the country are adopting measures to combat plastic pollution, and Maryland can set a national example by integrating forward-thinking infrastructure into our building codes.

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

Public Health and Equity Considerations

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

Moreover, by requiring these stations in all new construction and major renovations, HB 277 ensures equitable access to water, regardless of socioeconomic status or location. This aligns with Maryland's commitment to equity and environmental justice, ensuring that every community benefits from this essential infrastructure.

Conclusion

In conclusion, HB 277 represents a practical, impactful step toward achieving Maryland's climate goals, reducing waste, and enhancing public health while reinforcing our state's leadership in sustainability. I urge the committee to give this bill a favorable report and help Maryland continue its journey toward a cleaner, greener, and more forward-looking future.

Thank you for your consideration.