

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 509

(Delegate Hammen, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Task Force to Study Required Deposits on Returnable Beverage Containers

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study Required Deposits on Returnable Beverage Containers staffed by the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Department of Legislative Services. The bill sets out the specific duties of the task force and establishes a reporting requirement.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2008 and terminates December 31, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MDE and DLS are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must study:

- the costs, benefits, and feasibility of requiring deposits on returnable beverage containers in the State;
- how other states have implemented bottle bills and how effective such legislation has been in reducing litter and increasing recycling;

- how to most effectively integrate a bottle bill into the current statewide recycling program;
- issues related to the establishment and operation of recyclable container redemption centers;
- mechanisms to defray the operating and capital costs to local governments;
- the types of containers that should be subject to a bottle bill;
- the financial and operational effect of a bottle bill on State retailers; and
- any other relevant issues.

Current Law: In 1988, the Maryland Recycling Act required each county to submit a recycling plan. Jurisdictions with over 150,000 residents were required to reduce their solid waste by 20%, and jurisdictions with less than 150,000 residents were required to reduce their solid waste by 15%. Legislation enacted in 2000 established a voluntary statewide diversion goal of 40% by 2005. Counties have the flexibility to determine the best way to reach the required recycling rates.

Background: In 2006, the municipal solid waste stream totaled just over 7 million tons statewide. Data from the American Beverage Association and the Container Recycling Institute indicate that beverage containers constitute, on average, 3.2% of the municipal solid waste stream. Based on that percentage, there were approximately 224,000 tons of beverage containers in Maryland in 2006. MDE reports that 100,914 tons of beverage containers were recycled in 2006 (an estimated 45% of the total).

Eleven states (California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont) currently have container deposit programs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 336 (Senator Raskin, *et al.*) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Legislative Services

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mam/jr

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