

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 639

(Delegate Ruth, *et al.*)

Economic Matters

Sports Venues - Reusable Beverage Containers - Use During Sporting Events

This bill requires the owners or operators of a sports venues in the State, including the governing bodies of institutions of higher education as specified, to allow an individual attending a professional or collegiate sporting event at the sports venue to bring and use a reusable beverage container during a sporting event. Reusable beverage containers are defined as a drinking vessel made primarily of aluminum or stainless steel that can hold up to 24 ounces of liquid and is designed to be used more than once. Owners or operators, including institutions of higher education, may establish a rule or policy requiring reusable beverage containers to be empty on entering the sports venue.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential additional higher education expenditures associated with increased security needs at large venues operated by institutions of higher education. Potential minimal decrease in general fund and higher education expenditures related to maintenance and disposal of recycling at State-operated venues. Potential decrease in concessions higher education revenues for some institutions of higher education.

Local Effect: Potential, but likely minimal, additional expenditures associated with increased security needs at venues operated by local governments, including local community colleges. Potential minimal decrease in expenditures related to maintenance and disposal of recycling at venues operated by local governments, including local community colleges. To the extent locally owned sports venues sell concessions, potential minimal decrease in concessions revenues for institutions of higher education.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law: Current law does not address any requirements for reusable beverage container policies at sports venues in the State.

Solid Waste Infrastructure and Recycling in the State, Generally

The solid waste infrastructure in Maryland consists of both permitted and nonpermitted facilities, and solid waste is managed through a combination of recycling, composting, landfilling, incineration, storage, and exporting for disposal or recycling.

Maryland's recycling policy is guided by the Maryland Recycling Act (MRA), which sets mandatory recycling rates for State government and local jurisdictions, as well as a voluntary statewide waste diversion goal of 60% and a voluntary statewide recycling goal of 55% by 2020. Each county (including Baltimore City), must recycle at least 20% or 35% of the county's solid waste stream, depending on the county's population. Each county (including Baltimore City) must also prepare a recycling plan that addresses how the jurisdiction will achieve its mandatory recycling rate. The plan must be submitted to Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE's) Office of Recycling for approval when the jurisdiction submits its water and sewerage plan at least every 10 years. At least every two years, each county must also submit a progress report to MDE, which must include any revision of or amendment to the county plan that has been adopted.

MDE's Office of Recycling submits annual reports, in coordination with the Maryland Environmental Service, to the Governor and the General Assembly on specified information related to recycling in Maryland. Beginning in 2009, MDE has combined the *Maryland Waste Diversion Activities Report* and the *Solid Waste Managed in Maryland Report* into one report, the *Maryland Solid Waste Management and Diversion Report*.

State Fiscal Effect: Some larger sports venues, particularly those at larger institutions of higher education, may have meaningful fiscal and operational impact to implement the bill. The University of Maryland, College Park Campus (UMCP) expects to incur an estimated \$250,000 in annual security costs related to ensuring that containers are empty on entry and monitoring fans to ensure aluminum and steel beverage containers do not become harmful projectiles. UMCP further advises that it expects a \$750,000 annual decrease in concession revenues as a result of allowing reusable beverage containers in its venues, though the Department of Legislative Services advises the actual scale of the impact is difficult to estimate. Likewise, Morgan State University advises that its higher education auxiliary expenditures may increase and higher education auxiliary revenues may decrease.

For small athletic venues at smaller institutions of higher education, there may be little to no cost associated with allowing reusable beverage containers into athletic events as

specified. Many smaller venues also do not sell concessions at athletic events. Further, some smaller venues may already allow attendees to bring reusable beverage containers in a manner consistent with the bill. Accordingly, Baltimore City Community College (a state-funded institution) and St. Mary's College of Maryland both advise that the bill can be implemented using existing resources. Similarly, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources advises that most if not all of the few sites the agency owns and operates that may host events included in the bill's definition of sports venue already allow attendees to bring reusable beverage containers.

The Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) advises that, while MSA is responsible for the operations and maintenance of Orioles Park at Camden Yards and the M&T Bank Stadium, the bill would primarily affect the Orioles professional baseball team and the Ravens professional football team. MSA is responsible for recycling at the two stadiums, such that there may be a minimal decrease in cleaning and recycling costs for the two stadiums, but otherwise the bill does not directly affect State finances for either of the MSA stadiums.

Local Expenditures: Locally owned athletic event venues, including local community colleges may face additional security expenditures and loss of concession revenue as a result of the bill. However, given that many locally owned athletic venues are smaller scale with few security needs and are unlikely to sell a financially meaningful number of concessions at events, the overall impact to local government-owned sports venues is likely minimal.

Small Business Impact: Potential meaningful decrease in concession revenue for any concession vendor that is a small business. However, any impact cannot be estimated.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Community College; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Maryland Independent College and University Association; Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Stadium Authority; Department of Legislative Services

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