



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 824 – Beverage Container Deposit Program –
Establishment and Advisory Commission**

The Problem:

1. Recycling rates are low

In 2017, Maryland’s recycling rate was 44.1%.¹ The rate varies widely across the state, with 8.77% in Dorchester County to 58% in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. Every year, over 4 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland. Only 25%, or 1 billion, are sold back to industry to be reused.² That leaves 3 billion that go into our landfills, waterways, beaches and highways. For example: in 2014-2015, an estimated 18,900 tons of beverage containers were buried in the Prince George’s landfill;³ in 2014, Baltimore County disposed of an estimated 24,411 tons of beverage containers as refuse.⁴

2. What is recycled is often unusable

Even when beverage containers are recycled, materials are often contaminated. Paper that gets food on it is unusable and often contaminates all the paper around it. Glass is broken, plastic bottles get contaminants on them, rendering them unusable and put in landfills. When the material can be recycled, because of the degradation, it has a lower value. We think a plastic bottle recycled becomes another plastic bottle, but it doesn’t. Because of contamination and degradation, a plastic bottle becomes a carpet or other material and soon loses any usefulness. As a result, billions of containers end up as litter or in our landfills. This has been the case for many years.

What to do about this?

A Container Deposit Program

What is a Container Deposit Program? A CDP is a program whereby a deposit (typically 5-10 cents) is paid upon the purchase of a beverage in a container included in the program (a glass, plastic or aluminum can or bottle). That deposit is returned when the container is returned.

¹ That is a total recycling rate, which includes all recyclable materials.

² 2010 Beverage Market Data Analysis, Container Recycling Institute, 2013; Beverage Packaging in the U.S. 2011 edition.

³ SCS Engineers. “Waste characterization Study: Summary of Results 2014/2015” commissioned by the Prince George’s Department of Environmental Resources, Waste Management Division. Beverage Containers comprise about .% of municipal solid waste in the landfill.

⁴ Office of Budget and Finance, Baltimore County. “Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2015,” p. 116. “Operating Indicators by Function, fiscal Years 2005-2014”. The table reports a total of 348,730 tons of refuse in 2014. Feb. 18, 2016 testimony by the Baltimore County recycling coordinator indicated beverage containers were 7% of municipal solid waste.

A Beverage Container Deposit Program:

- Incentivizes return of the container, thus increasing redemption & recycling rates. In states with Container Deposit Laws the redemption rates are much higher: Michigan and Oregon have rates are above 90%.
- Reduces roadside litter and solid waste
- Conserves energy and natural resources
- Reduces greenhouses gas emissions
- Creates better quality recyclables
- Shifts costs associated with used beverage containers to those responsible for the waste.

A CDP complements curbside recycling.

HB 824:

- 1) Establishes a Beverage Container Deposit Program in Maryland
- 2) Sets some parameters: a 10-cent deposit (this is shown to vastly increase redemption rates), a goal of 90% redemption, and states the program must be convenient to users to encourage use.
- 3) Creates a commission of stakeholders to determine the details.

I ask for a favorable report.