



**Date:** February 26, 2020

**Bill:** House Bill 824 – Beverage Container Deposit Program- Establishment and Advisory Commission

**Position:** Support

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Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests your support for **House Bill 824 – Beverage Container Deposit Program- Establishment and Advisory Commission**, which will limit the harmful impact single-use plastics, such as plastic bottles, have on neighborhoods and wildlife across Maryland.

The National Aquarium believes that plastic pollution is an issue we can stop in our lifetime. This bill is an important step in making that a reality. An estimated 8 million metric tons of plastic enters the ocean each year; that is equivalent to at least one dump truck full of plastic entering the ocean every minute. If current practices continue, plastic input into the ocean is expected to double by 2025. While these plastics break down into smaller pieces, they never completely disappear from the environment.

The best way to stop or reverse this trend is through a comprehensive and holistic solution. The National Aquarium defines a comprehensive solution using four key approaches: stop plastic pollution at its source; change behaviors; clean up existing plastic pollution; and provide education and outreach. No single approach will stop plastic pollution. Comprehensive solutions must contain policies, such as container deposit laws, that address each of the four areas.

In 2018, 42,000 plastic bottles and caps were cleaned up from Maryland's coastline through the International Coastal Cleanup. Container deposit programs are considered the most effective tool for reducing the amount of litter in communities. These programs incentivize Marylanders to consider how their choices, such as disposing beverage containers, can impact the environment and encourage positive behavior changes. Currently, ten states and Guam have enacted deposit programs. States with container deposit laws report significant reduction in litter from beverage containers as well as overall litter. In addition, recycling rates have been reported as more than double that of states without container deposit laws.

By passing HB 824, Maryland will reduce the amount of harmful plastic entering waterways and littering communities. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 354.**

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