



To: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Ellen Valentino  
On behalf of MD-DE-DC Beverage Association

Date: January 21, 2021

Subject: SB 116 MDE – Office of Recycling – Recycling Market Development Support

The MD-DE-DC Beverage Association supports SB 116. We believe that a careful and collaborative evaluation of Maryland’s recycling programs and markets for recyclable materials will help the State further reduce waste and ensure valuable materials can have a second life. This is a top priority for our industry and the objective of a new industry-wide initiative called “[Every Bottle Back.](#)”

The “Every Bottle Back” initiative is a breakthrough effort to reduce the industry’s use of new plastic by making significant investments to improve the collection of the industry’s valuable plastic bottles so they can be made into new bottles. Our members are coming together to support the circular plastics economy by reinforcing to consumers the value of their 100% recyclable plastic bottles and caps and ensuring they do not end up as waste in oceans, rivers, or landfills. This program is being executed in conjunction with two of the country’s most prominent environmental nonprofits and the leading investment firm focused on the development of the circular economy. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) will provide strategic scientific advice to help measure the industry’s progress in reducing its plastic footprint and The Recycling Partnership and Closed Loop Partners will assist in deploying funds for the initiative.

This initiative will do the following:

1. Measure industry progress in reducing the use of new plastic in the United States through a collaboration with ReSource: Plastic, WWF’s corporate activation hub to help companies turn their ambitious plastic waste commitments into meaningful and measurable progress by rethinking the way plastic material is produced, used and recycled. Specifically, ABA will use the ReSource: Plastic accounting methodology to track on the collective progress made on executing strategies to reduce the use of new plastic as well as a resource in identifying additional interventions.
2. Improve the quality and availability of recycled plastic in key regions of the country by directing the equivalent of \$400 million to The Recycling Partnership and Closed Loop Partners through a new \$100 million industry fund that will be matched three-to-one by other grants and investors. The investments will be used to improve sorting, processing, and collection in areas with the biggest infrastructure gaps to help increase the amount of recycled plastic available to be remade into beverage bottles.

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3. Launch a public awareness campaign to help consumers understand the value of 100% recyclable bottles through community outreach and partner engagement and reinforce the importance of getting these bottles back, so they can be remade into new bottles. According to a poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies (POS) on behalf of ABA, nearly half of consumers were unaware that America's leading beverage companies are already making bottles that are 100% recyclable, including the caps.
4. Work together to leverage our packaging to remind consumers that our bottles are 100% recyclable and can be remade into new bottles. Beverage companies will begin introducing voluntary messaging on packages beginning in late 2020.

In closing, although our plastic beverage bottles account for less than 1% of the waste stream they represent a significant value for recyclers. We will continue to make commitments and look forward to working with the sponsors, MDE and all stakeholders to meet our common goals.

Thank you.

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*MD-DE-DC Beverage Association is the trade association representing Maryland's non-alcoholic beverage manufacturers and distributors. Maryland is home to four manufacturing facilities and is a distribution hub for the mid-Atlantic. Our members offer consumers myriad brands, flavors and packaging choices and a full range of drink options including soft drinks in a wide range with many zero and low-calorie beverages, ready-to-drink teas, bottled waters, water beverages, 100 percent juice, juice drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks and milk.*