

JEN TERRASA
Legislative District 13
Howard County

Environment and Transportation
Committee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 9, 2023

To: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Delegate Jen Terrasa
District 13, Howard County

Re: Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB1089, Maryland Beverage Container
Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB1089, which establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to reduce the volume of litter and plastic pollution from beverage containers that ultimately end up in landfills or are incinerated. The other main goal of HB1089 is to increase the recycling of beverage containers by incentivizing the distribution and sales of beverage containers that can actually be recycled.

The Problem

In 2019, 5.2 billion beverage containers were sold in Maryland, enough for 863 per person. It is estimated that 1.2 billion of them, only 23% of the total bottles sold, were able to be recycled. That means in one year around 4 billion beverage containers became waste, ending up in landfills or littering our environment.

Currently, there are multiple challenges to relying on our current system of recycling in the state of Maryland. Many recyclable aluminum, glass, or plastic containers never make it to a recycling facility. Plus, according to the National Waste and Recycling Association, roughly 25% of what is placed into the single-stream recycling system is too contaminated to go anywhere other than a landfill.

Additional negative impacts on the environment (beyond the litter and plastic pollution on our land and waterways) include wasted energy and resources. Greenhouse gasses are generated during the production and manufacturing of new beverage containers as well as during the transportation, processing, and disposal of containers. However, with

the expanded use of recycled scrap materials in new products we could reduce those emissions and the impact on our climate.

What the Bill Does

HB1089 requires that beginning January 1, 2025, a producer of beverage containers must register with Maryland Department of the Environment and pay a registration fee, as well as create a Beverage Container Stewardship Plan, in order to sell or distribute the containers in Maryland.

Additionally, HB1089 creates a deposit program of 10 cents for beverage containers 24 fluid ounces or less and 15 cents for beverage containers more than 24 fluid ounces. These deposits will go towards the State Recycling Trust Fund to implement this recycling refund program. Deposits on beverage containers have been enacted in 10 other states, and they have seen benefits, such as increased recycling redemption rates and in some cases, recycling rates for beverage containers reaching up to 90 percent. In these states, bottle bill programs produce recycling rates three times higher than single-stream recycling can.

How it Works

Distributors of beverage containers collect a deposit when they deliver their products to a retailer. Marylanders who choose to buy one of these beverage containers will pay a 10 or 15 cent deposit when buying their drink. When finished, they can return their empty bottles to a store and receive their 10 or 15 cent deposit back. This facilitates the transfer of the empty bottles to a recycling plant, which will sort the recyclables correctly and return the deposit to the retailer. The recyclable material is then used to make new beverage containers. Not only does this increase the actual recyclability of these products, it limits the creation of beverage containers that are using virgin resources.

HB1089 will help create a supply of recycled content in order for more containers to be made out of previously used and recycled items. The resources this bill provides supports the efforts of my companion legislation, HB342, the Postconsumer Recycled Content Program bill. That bill creates demand for food-grade recycled content for beverage and food containers by requiring a certain percentage of recycled content in plastic containers sold in Maryland.

HB1089 sets a goal to achieve a 90 percent recycle redemption rate, with benchmarks to reach a 70 percent redemption rate and 65 percent recycling rate by 2026 and an 80 percent redemption rate and 85 percent recycling rate by 2029.

Not only does this bill decrease waste, it will also support a new market in recycling-related jobs. The collection, processing, and remanufacturing of these beverage containers into other containers will stimulate the recycling market and increase local jobs. In Massachusetts, which has a similar program and population size as Maryland, there have already been 600 jobs created in redemption centers along with hundreds

more created in processing and secondary manufacturing. HB1089 should not have a negative effect on local curbside/single-stream recycling as it acts as a complement to curbside recycling pick-up and will not take away the jobs of those who currently collect recyclables.

Ultimately, the goal of this bill is to reduce the volume of single-use beverage containers sold in Maryland, which leads to decreased waste and litter around the state.

I respectfully urge a favorable report of HB1089.