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FAVORABLE Report – HOUSE BILL 1089: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in strong support of **HB1089** on behalf of Waterkeepers Chesapeake - a coalition of seventeen Waterkeepers, Riverkeepers, and Coastkeepers working to protect and maintain the ability of the public to safely enjoy the waters of our State. The plastic waste problem in the state of Maryland and the consequences it creates for our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay are of great concern. While some cities and counties have made steps towards reducing plastic waste, such as the banning of single use plastic bags, Maryland as a whole must take wider-reaching action to reduce massive plastic waste from beverage containers, such as plastic bottles. Beverage containers comprise over half of the trash by volume collected in trash traps in the Anacostia River watershed, with plastic bottles being “sixty percent of the weight of the trash floating on the river at any given time,”¹ according to Trey Sherard, Anacostia Riverkeeper. Maryland, like other states have already done, would greatly benefit from a recycling refund program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce the litter, pollution, and costs associated with plastic waste.

HB1089 will create the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund Program (the Program) establishing a framework for the redemption of redeemable beverage containers sold in the State. Programs like this have proven to be effective for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. In other states, a small deposit, usually five cents, is added to the purchase of beverage containers and is refunded to customers when the containers are returned for recycling. Currently, Michigan and Oregon have the highest return rates of U.S. bottle bill states, with more than eighty-five percent of eligible beverage containers returned by consumers for recycling. Not only are there proven environmental and health benefits through increased recycling and reduced plastic waste, but the Program would not be a heavy financial burden on the state, as most of the financing of the Program becomes the responsibility of the producer. Maryland stands to gain a lot from **HB1089**, not limited to improved water quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions from plastics, but the creation of jobs through the reinvigoration of the recycling industry provides an

¹ <https://www.budgetdumpster.com/blog/anacostia-riverkeeper-partnership/>

economic benefit to the state. Given Maryland's incredibly low recycling rate as compared to other states that have already enacted bottle bills, our communities deserve the opportunity to be engaged in a similar program like **HB1089** would provide them.

For these reasons stated above, we urge the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB1089**.

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