



Comments on HB 284 Environment - Reducing Packaging Materials – Producer Responsibility  
Who We Are \* Challenges with HB 284 \* What We Support

## Who We Are

Maryland-DC-Delaware Beverage Association represents local beverage manufacturers and distributors. Our industry provides good jobs to nearly 2,800 Maryland residents and we have a wide footprint in Maryland with facilities located throughout the state. We are proud of the products we make, our commitment to local communities, and our commitment to the environment. We strongly believe our beverage packaging and bottles demonstrate this commitment.

The beverage industry plays an important role in the circular recycling economy. Our packaging is specifically designed and optimized for recycling. We make PET bottles and aluminum cans that are 100% recyclable, those containers have a high commodity value, and, when collected and recycled, can become new bottles and cans. The industry has invested in local and regional recycling infrastructure for more than 40 years.

The companies have also made commitments to collect and recycle packaging waste, to incorporate more recycled content into our PET bottles, and to reduce the amount of new plastic in our bottles. At a national and local level, we are working to get every bottle back to meet these ambitious goals and support a circular economy for our beverage containers.

The industry's Every Bottle Back program, announced in late 2019, asserted beverage companies' commitment to reduce new plastic use and increase collection of their valuable bottles. The program, launched by The Coca-Cola Company, Keurig Dr Pepper, and PepsiCo, and supported by Maryland's local bottlers, represents collaboration among competitors. Collectively, they support the circular plastics economy by reinforcing to consumers the value of 100 percent recyclable plastic bottles and caps while taking steps to ensure they don't end up as waste in oceans, rivers or landfills.

## Why We Can Not Support HB 284, as written

The program described in the legislation would be unlike other extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs around the world and does not align with best practices for EPR developed by the beverage industry and other organizations.

In order for us to support, an EPR system must:

1. **Have strong environmental outcomes.** This means any EPR system we support must include all packaging and printed paper.

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2. **Be convenient for consumers.** Consumers must be able to properly and consistently recycle for the system to be effective.
3. **Be financially sustainable.** Proper roles for government and producers are critical to achieve financial sustainability and system efficiency. Government should provide oversight, setting the scope of the system and approving its design. The producer responsibility organization, or PRO, funds and runs the system, ensuring that all fees are used exclusively for running the system.
4. **Provide producers first access to their materials.** The producers funding the system should have first access to their recovered materials.
5. **Support environmental justice objectives in recycling systems,** addressing issues such as inadequate access to recycling and disproportionate siting of facilities in underserved communities.

## What We Support

We believe that **good data precedes good policy** and that is the first best step to determining how Maryland develops an EPR system or other recycling polices that will have measurable outcomes and make recycling equitable for all Marylanders regardless of where they live.

We support a study that will provide important data and information around the current county and municipal infrastructure, full cycle costs, the current processing of recyclables, and commodities being recycled. This is the first best step to bring good comprehensive EPR to Maryland.

Thank you.

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