



March 7, 2022

Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair  
House Environment & Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Support for HB 1089, An act creating the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Upstream **in support of HB 1089**, which will establish a beverage container deposit return system for Maryland with strong targets and incentives for reuse and refill.

Upstream is a national non-profit organization that sparks innovative solutions to plastic pollution by helping people, businesses, and communities shift from single-use to reuse. We seek to live in a world where people and the planet are treated as indisposable and communities thrive without all the waste. **We believe deposit return systems (DRSs) are crucial to accelerating the new reuse economy.**

**HB 1089 will establish a DRS with strong reuse and refill targets for beverage containers in Maryland.** Specifically, the bill requires at least 10% of beverage containers to be returned and refilled by the end of 2032. The bill also requires each beverage container stewardship organization to establish a fee structure for participating producers that incentivizes investments into reusable and refillable container systems, and each stewardship plan to describe anticipated investments made to improve reuse. These requirements and financial incentives are crucial to scaling reuse among beverage companies.

**The beverage sector is one of the ripest sectors for reuse.** Today, more beverage reuse/refill systems operate at scale than all other open reuse systems (such as reuse for take-out/delivery or bulk sales of dry goods), and virtually all of them use DRSs to get their containers back. As early as the late 1800s, beer, soda and dairy companies created the original mass-market DRSs to get their bottles back for washing and refilling. The distribution and wash hubs they built allowed virtually all

commercial beverages in the U.S. to be sold in refillable bottles. Around the world, beverage companies have continued to operate and expand their refillables lines:

- In Germany, 82% of beer is sold in refillable bottles, and 99% are returned for refilling. Overall, 54% of beverages sold in Germany are in refillables.
- In Ontario, Canada, 85% of beer is sold in refillable bottles, with 97% returned and an average reuse rate of 15 times.
- Refillables account for significant portions of beverage sales in Mexico (27%), Columbia (54%), Brazil (24%), China (22%), Vietnam (31%), Thailand (20%), India (34%) and Nigeria (43%).
- The Philippines has the highest national rate of beverages sold in refillables: 59%.

**Reusable beverage containers are better for the environment.** After a third use, reusable glass bottles are already less impactful than single-use glass, PET or aluminum cans. Used 25 times and then recycled, reusable glass bottles create 85% fewer climate emissions than single-use glass; 57% fewer than aluminum cans; and 70% fewer than single-use PET. Refillable PET bottles can save up to 40% of the raw materials and 50% of the greenhouse gas emissions compared to the production of single-use PET bottles. Refillables also benefit the ocean: **Oceana estimates that a 10% increase in the share of beverages sold in refillables could result in a 22% decrease in marine plastic pollution.** This would keep 4.5 to 7.6 billion plastic bottles out of the ocean each year.

Forty years of data on DRS laws in the U.S. demonstrate that refundable deposits are effective at boosting collection and recycling rates, creating local economic development opportunities and jobs, generating clean streams of recyclable materials through source-separation, preventing roadside litter and plastic pollution, and catalyzing reuse. **The time has come for every state to establish a DRS.**

Upstream's vision is for 30% of consumer goods to be sold in reusables by 2030. To realize this vision, we need consumer brands to have real skin in the game when it comes to designing, packaging, and selling their products. **HB 1089 will put the responsibility for redesigning, reusing, and recycling beverage containers where it belongs - on beverage producers. We strongly encourage you to favorably report this bill from your Committee.**

For any questions, please contact me at [sydney@upstreamolutions.org](mailto:sydney@upstreamolutions.org).

Thank you for all you do,

Sydney Harris  
Policy Director