



**HoCoClimateAction.org**  
Howard County, Maryland

## **Testimony on HB1089 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

**Hearing Date:** March 9, 2023

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Terrasa

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation, Economic Matters

**Submitting:** Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action

**Position:** Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,400 subscribers. It is also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

Howard County Climate Action supports HB1089, the Maryland Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (HB1089), which would increase beverage container recycling and reduce waste and litter. The plastic pollution crisis is part of the climate crisis.

Marylanders buy more than 5.2 billion beverage containers annually, but only about a quarter of them are recycled. Four billion containers every year end up in our environment – in the landfill, incinerated, or littering the landscape and waterways. Producing new single-use beverage containers with virgin materials emits more climate polluting gases and requires more energy than producing refillable beverage containers or containers made from recycled materials. Refillable glass bottles that are returned can be reused up to 50 times, and refillable PET plastic bottles up to 20 times. Beverage-container deposit programs also provide high-quality, food-grade materials for new containers.

The Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (HB1089) would reduce beverage container litter by as much as two-thirds, reducing plastic pollution, and more than tripling the recycling rate for beverage containers in Maryland to 90%. Ten states, covering about 90 million people, have long-standing, highly successful beverage container recycling refund programs. These add a small deposit to the cost of beverage containers that is refunded to customers when the containers are returned for recycling. Under this program, we buy the beverage, but borrow the container. The deposit is a powerful incentive to return used beverage containers and to collect those that are littered, for their refund value.

The program would also lower the costs to local governments for recycling, landfilling, incinerating, and collecting of littered beverage containers, while creating new green jobs. Every year we wait, another 4 billion beverage containers enter the environment.

We urge a favorable report for HB1089.

Howard County Climate Action  
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