

March 7, 2023

Environment & Transportation Committee
Delegate Kumar Barve, Chairman; Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

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

We are writing in support of House Bill 1089, “Maryland Beverage Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.”

We applaud the bill for specifying a **minimum deposit of 10¢**, and for **setting a target of 90% redemption**. Michigan and Oregon, the two U.S. states with dime deposits, have achieved much higher redemption rates—89% and 86% respectively in 2019—than the deposit states with nickel deposits (where redemption rates range from 50% to 75%). *Ten cents is a strong financial incentive for people to return containers rather than throw them in the trash or litter them.* When consumers who purchased the beverage do not directly take bottles and cans in for refund, there are always other groups and individuals ready to step in and do the redemption for them as a means of generating supplemental income.

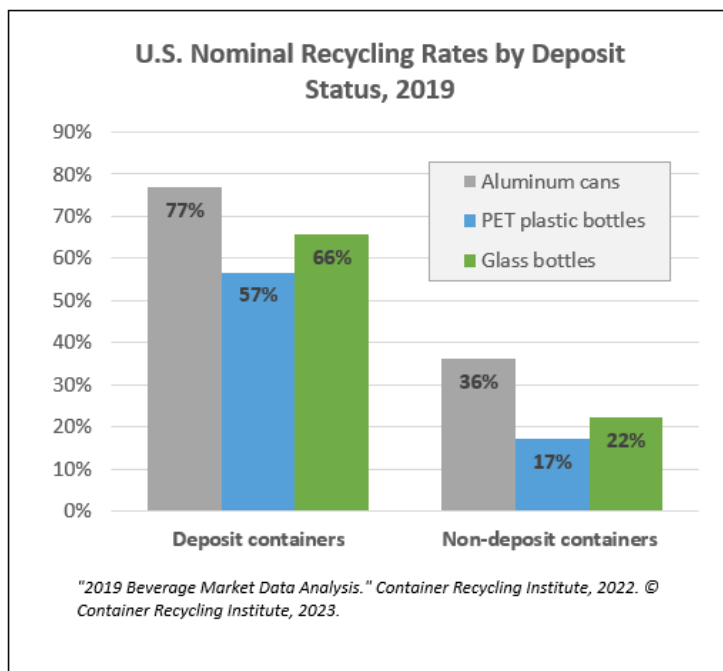
For over 50 years, beverage container deposit laws, or “bottle bills,” have been successful in achieving recycling rates that are up to 3 times higher than those of bottles and cans without deposits. As the graphic at right shows, more than three quarters (77%) of aluminum cans with a deposit were recycled nationwide in 2019, in contrast to just over one third (36%) of cans lacking a deposit. The differences for bottles are more pronounced: 57% vs. 17% for non-deposit PET plastic, and 66% vs. 22% for non-deposit glass.

Increasing beverage sales nationwide has led to burgeoning bottle and can waste.

Based on national statistics, CRI estimates that 79% of the 5.4 billion beverage bottles and cans sold in Maryland in 2017 were wasted: littered, landfilled, or incinerated. That level of consumption and wasting represents a significant burden on taxpayers: whether through city-run recycling programs or municipally-contracted trash pick-up and disposal.

Deposits have multiple benefits, including:

- **Achieving higher recycling rates** than municipal programs alone.



- **Transferring** the financial and operational responsibility for recycling from the local taxpayer to the producers of disposable beverage containers.
- **Adding value to local and regional economies** through the sale and processing of scrap materials.
- **Avoiding greenhouse gas emissions and reducing energy use** by displacing virgin materials in manufacturing.
- **Reducing litter** that is expensive for public and private entities to clean up, that causes injuries to people and domestic animals, and that adds to harmful ocean plastic waste.

If Maryland were to pass this deposit bill, CRI estimates that the state would recycle **almost 3 billion additional containers annually—or more than 200,000 tons of metal, glass, plastic and paper**—over and above the recycling currently taking place. By reducing the need to make new bottles and cans from virgin materials, this additional recycling would eliminate about 195,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions: **an amount equivalent to taking more than 42,000 cars off the road for a year.**

We are optimistic that there will be strong markets for deposit containers generated in Maryland, in part because multiple global beverage brands have made public commitments to increase their use of recycled materials, as the below table shows.

Selected plastics reduction commitments by global brands		
Company	Timeframe	Commitment or target
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Equivalent of 100% of containers collected and recycled
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Average 50% recycled content in bottles
Danone	by 2025	100% of packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable
McDonald's	by 2025	100% of guest packaging from renewable, recycled or certified sources
Kraft Heinz	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable, reusable or compostable
Nestlé	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable or reusable

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These lofty goals can only be met through the increased availability of high-quality beverage bottles and cans for use as feedstock in new containers. Deposit programs consistently generate such high-quality bottles and cans. For example, deposit-grade PET bottles have recently had a value of 17.75¢ per pound, **twice the value of non-deposit, curbside PET** (9¢ per pound).

With the announcement of multiple new deposit laws (including Uruguay, Spain, Ireland, and the United Kingdom), **over 700 million people will have access to deposit programs by 2025.** This trend is projected to continue as more nations realize that deposits are a vital part of the solution to the problem of bottle and can waste and plastic pollution.

In sum, CRI strongly supports the passage of a beverage container deposit law in Maryland.

Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Collins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Collins".

Susan Collins
President, Container Recycling Institute

About the Container Recycling Institute: *CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging.*