

February 26, 2024

Hon. Marc Korman, Chair
Hon. Regina Boyce, Vice-Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Committee members,

As the Mayor of Glen Echo, Maryland, I am writing to express my strong support for HB 735, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, a.k.a., the Maryland Bottle Bill. This bill will address a significant and growing environmental problem – beverage container litter and plastic pollution – by diverting empty beverage containers from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing the volume of solid waste generated and relieving municipalities like mine from a significant financial burden,

The program would add a small refundable deposit to beverage containers, to be refunded when the container is returned by customers for recycling. By putting a value on empty containers, the public has an incentive not to litter and to retrieve containers that are littered for the refund. The program will provide relief for municipal budgets, save landfill space, divert containers from incinerators, reduce roadside litter, and spur recycling statewide. It will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create new jobs in the recycling industry, and provide high-quality materials that can be recycled into new beverage containers.

Programs like these have been operating successfully for decades in ten U.S. states and around the world. The results indicate that a minimum 10-cent deposit like the one proposed in HB 735 would achieve a 90% redemption rate. The Maryland Bottle Bill is based on the lessons from that experience and promises even greater impact on litter by its broader coverage of beverage containers than states with existing programs. Based on their experience, we can expect a reduction of beverage container litter by at least 70-84%.

This program places no responsibility for implementation or enforcement on municipalities and will reduce municipal waste and recycling costs. Municipalities have the option to run their own beverage container redemption centers, in return for a per container handling fee. For the first two years of the program, if a municipality does realize an increase in net costs of waste management that can be attributable to the Maryland Bottle Bill, they will be compensated by the program. However, a review of experience in dozens of jurisdictions across the world strongly suggests that local governments will experience cost savings.

I urge you to support HB 735, which will reduce plastic pollution and beverage container litter, provide cleaner roads, parks, and waterways, and create savings for municipal budgets and local taxpayers.

Respectfully submitted.

Mayor Dia Costello
Glen Echo, Maryland

