



## **[HB0735](#): Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2024

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegates Terrasa, Edelson, Bofo, Charkoudian, Cullison, Embry, Fair, Feldmark, Foley, Fraser-Hidalgo, Healey, Holmes, A. Johnson, Kaufman, Lehman, Love, Pena-Melnyk, Qi, Ruth, Solomon, Stein, Stewart, Taveras, Taylor, Valderrama, Williams, Wu, and Ziegler

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

**Submitting Organization:** **Less Plastic Please** by Liz Feighner

**Position:** Favorable

[Less Plastic Please](#) is a Howard County based grassroots organization representing more than 200 subscribers. We are also a partner of the [Zero Waste Team](#) of [Howard County Sierra Club](#) and a [Beyond Plastics](#) Affiliate. **We urge support of HB0735**, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, which would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent deposit that is refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling.

Reducing the production of plastics and creating a zero-waste economy is one of our top concerns. Less Plastic Please spearheaded campaigns with several organizations in Howard County to advocate for reducing single-use plastics through two successful bills, [Plastic Bag Fee](#) and [Plastic Reduction Law](#). We also hosted a [webinar on the Story of Plastics in 2020](#). As we highlighted during the discussion, plastic pollution is an environmental justice and public health crisis: Fracking, plastics production, litter, and disposal in landfills and by incineration harm communities of color disproportionately. We believe that social justice, racial justice and environmental justice are all part of a single, globally connected Movement for Justice.

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction aka the “MD bottle bill” is a very sensible bill. It is an easy, low-hanging fruit solution to reduce plastic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the energy needed to produce new beverage containers. This could also be called the Back-to-the-Future bill as we easily did this before years ago and would be much better off had we gone back in time and continued bottle deposits instead of switching to single-use beverage containers.

In Howard County, to our disappointment, we learned that all those glass bottles that we have been so diligently recycling are not going to be made into new bottles but are used as landfill

cover. This bill would assure most glass bottles would be recovered instead of used as landfill cover.

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. This bill would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit, depending on the size of the container. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the bottle is returned and is estimated to achieve a 90% return rate.

This program would be self-funded from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. So while the state and local counties are grappling with extremely tight budgets, the program established by the bill would not cost the state at all and relieve the counties and ultimately the taxpayers from the burden of expensive waste/recycling costs.

This bill would provide a high rate of return for containers by creating incentives for the development of refillable and reusable containers. It isn't cost effective to produce reusable containers if they are not being returned in order to create a circular and zero waste economy.

The state of Maryland needs to protect our waterways and our beloved Chesapeake Bay from plastic and litter pollution and this bill will accomplish this goal.

We urge a favorable report for HB0735.

Submitted for [Less Plastic Please](#)  
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