



BRENTWOOD Maryland

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

**THE TOWN OF BRENTWOOD SUPPORTS HB075/SB0642
MARYLAND BEVERAGE CONTAINER RECYCLING REFUND AND
LITTER REDUCTION PROGRAM.**

For the Honorable Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee; Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee; Senator Augustine; Delegates Fennell and Ivey.

This legislation would reduce plastic pollution and litter, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create jobs through a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, depending on container size.

About 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold annually in Maryland. Despite the widespread availability of curbside collection of recyclables and public recycling receptacles, only about a quarter of the containers (23%) are captured for recycling. Four billion containers a year, 2.6 billion of which are plastic, are left in the environment – in landfills, roadsides, waterways – or incinerated. According to the Anacostia Watershed Society, beverage containers are about half of the trash by volume in the watershed’s trash traps.

Humans are being exposed to both plastic particles and chemical additives being released from plastic debris according to *Environmental Science and Technology* (2016). The material is fragmenting, leaching, and spreading throughout the biosphere, including indoor and outdoor air, soil, and water systems. Not only is human microplastic consumption estimated at annual ranges from 39000 to 52000 particles, but microplastics are ingested by marine life, injuring, and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Consumers who meet their recommended water intake through bottled sources may be ingesting an additional 90000 microplastics annually, compared to 4000 microplastics for those who consume only tap water.

A solution for Maryland is beverage container deposit programs, also known as *bottle bills*, which are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. Ten states have longstanding, successful programs that add a small deposit to the purchase price of beverage containers that are refunded to customers when the containers are returned for recycling. The recycling rate for beverage containers in these programs is 2-3 times higher than for containers not subject to a deposit. States with a 10-cent deposit have achieved container recycling rates of 90 percent compared to Maryland’s of 23 percent of containers sold in the state.

As a vibrant community in the Anacostia Watershed along the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River just outside of Washington DC, the Town of Brentwood has frequent litter and trash clean-ups to free our community of pollution. Brentwood is one of the most densely populated areas of Prince George’s County. With over 3800 residents, we are 51 percent

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Latino/Hispanic with a median income at 58 percent of the Area Median Income. Brentwood is recognized federally as a historically disadvantaged community. The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool of the White House Council on Environmental Quality identifies Brentwood as a community faced with significant burdens. Environmental justice is a real concern for municipal leadership and the community.

This legislation would also provide savings for local governments since beverage producers would finance the costs of the collection and processing of three-quarters of beverage containers currently being disposed or littered and the collection and processing of some containers currently recycled curbside. The program will also divert materials from costly landfills and incinerators, which are costs borne by taxpayers and local governments. Until Maryland can place the burden where it belongs – on producers of these materials – it is still placed on local governments and residents, and disproportionately on historically disadvantaged communities. Brentwood asks that the Committee, our Senator, our Delegates, and the Governor pass the bills.

Sincerely,

Town of Brentwood Mayor and Town Council

