

# **HB\_735\_FAV\_LateTestimony\_AllisonBlood**

Uploaded by: Allison Blood

Position: FAV

Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for your time. My name is Allison Blood and I am the Environmental Program Manager with the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore.

The Waterfront Partnership submits this testimony in favor of HB 735, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

We are a Business Improvement District responsible for maintaining, improving, and protecting Baltimore's Inner Harbor. We represent major businesses and developers located along the Baltimore Waterfront. In 2009 we set a goal, in partnership with Baltimore City, to have a swimmable and fishable Baltimore Harbor. To that end, we have supported the implementation of the stormwater management fee, installed four trash wheels, and advocated for City Council proposals aimed at reducing litter in our neighborhoods and streams. We do this because it is good for the environment but also because it is good for business.

The Inner Harbor sits at the end of the Jones Falls, a stream that drains 64 square miles of land in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. When it rains, a tremendous amount of litter comes down the Jones Falls and covers the Harbor. That is why, in May of 2014, we installed the world's first solar powered water wheel trash interceptor, Mr. Trash Wheel. Since then, we have added 3 more trash wheels at other watershed outfalls around the Baltimore Harbor. Over the last nine years our googly eyed friends have picked up over **one million eight hundred thousand** plastic bottles. This is only 0.05% of the bottles produced in Maryland that end up as trash or litter annually. Capturing plastic bottles in our waterways is not a solution. We've heard about the havoc this litter wreaks on our public spaces, wildlife and habitat, and human health. The trash wheels are a temporary solution to an urgent problem. This bottle bill will turn off the tap of plastic bottle pollution in our environment.

The businesses that make up Waterfront Partnership pay us to collect this litter, but they would rather we spend their money on events, landscaping, and attractions like the Inner Harbor Ice Rink. This bill would simultaneously save businesses money and increase revenue around the Harbor because a Harbor that is clean and healthy is a harbor that people will visit time and again.



Policy change has been the key to reducing other types of litter in our waterways. Maryland's polystyrene ban led to an 80% reduction in styrofoam collected by the trash wheels. Baltimore city and Baltimore county plastic bag bans have led to a 35% reduction in plastic bags collected by Mr. Trash Wheel in the short time they have been implemented.

We respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB 1089. Thank you for your time.

**Allison Blood, Environmental Program Manager**  
**Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore**  
[allison@waterfrontpartnership.org](mailto:allison@waterfrontpartnership.org)  
**Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore**  
**650 S. Exeter St., Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21202**

# **Testimony HB0735 Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Anne Ambler

Position: FAV

**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB0735 -Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

**Submitted by Anne Ambler as an individual**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: February 28, 2024**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Committee Members:

Thank you for the good work you and your committee have been doing, and thank you for this opportunity to encourage **a favorable report for HB0735**. HB0735 addresses our major problem of unhealthy, unsightly beverage container litter in a way that has proven highly effective in other states.

Manufacturers have placed the onus for recycling on the public and governments, but in reality, only 23 percent of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold annually in Maryland are recycled, leaving 4 billion in our streams, on our roads, in landfills, or incinerated. For the last 20 years I have participated in or led stream cleanups, collecting the bottles and cans that groups of partying kids and careless individuals have left behind. Some of these can be recycled, but many are too dirty and must be trashed. The plastic bottles that become buried in the mud and beyond our reach biodegrade slowly and we are all aware of the consumption by fish, animals, and us humans of quite a large amount of microplastics. While we don't know exactly the level of harm to our own health, it is pretty clear that our state's streams and wildlife would be much better off without this form of pollution.

HB0735 would change the incentives by imposing a 10 or 15-cent returnable fee on every beverage container sold in Maryland, depending on size. I have seen this work in other states, where the return rate can reach 90 percent with at least a 10-cent fee. In Europe the fees can be even higher. If the partyers in our parks, or the drivers who toss bottles from the car do not care about getting their deposits back, you can count on other people to collect these containers as fast as they are deposited. Money is money, after all. And in the case of plastic bottles, when returned clean, this food-grade plastic content can be made into new containers, saving resources.

The program is revenue neutral, self-funding, always useful in a budget crunch. Truly, the time has come to join other forward- looking states in implementing a program that reduces litter, improves water quality and health, and saves resources. I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on **HB0735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Anne Ambler  
12505 Kuhl Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20902  
[anambler@gmail.com](mailto:anambler@gmail.com)

**Bottle HB0735 Favorable\_SBCLT-2.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carlos Sanchez

Position: FAV



**Feb 26th 2024**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

**South Baltimore Community Land Trust's Favorable Testimony for HB0735 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Dear members of the Environmental and Transportation Committee,

My name is Carlos Sanchez. I am a youth leader committed to organizing community power for environmental justice and I work alongside fellow residents at the South Baltimore Community Land Trust where we are working to make development without displacement and zero waste a reality. Together, we helped create Baltimore's first zero waste plan back in 2020 - passed by city council - which included the bottle bill as a priority action to help advance Baltimore away from reliance on landfilling and incineration. But as we all know - we're now in 2024 and still don't have this basic step forward that we need.

Instead, I live the consequences of Maryland's choice not to pass pro zero waste bottle bill legislation every single day. I live in South Baltimore and work in Curtis Bay. Curtis Bay has an overall EJ score of 100% according to MDE's EJ Screening Tool. The neighborhood is also in the 90.57th percentile for asthma emergency room discharges; 87.90th percentile for low infant birth rates; and 88.38th percentile for myocardial infarction discharges.

How will a strong bottle bill, informed by environmental justice communities, make a difference for me, my family and my communities? First, it will reduce toxic air pollution from burning plastic as well as Greenhouse gas emissions. Second, it will save local governments millions of dollars in waste disposal fees that it can then invest in more zero waste solutions like re-use. And third, it will create jobs.

But now I want to share how Maryland's failure to pass this piece of zero waste legislation impacts me everyday....First, when I wake up in the morning in my community of Lakeland I can see the BRESKO trash burning incinerator just about a mile away burning tons of plastic bottles that I breathe in. I want everyone to stop right now - close your eyes and take a breath. Now imagine that every breath you take includes toxic chemicals from burning plastics. How do you feel? The air we breathe in EJ communities is what's at stake with Maryland's Bottle bill.

Now open your eyes.



Next, when I go to work in Curtis Bay in South Baltimore I walk by alleys and vacant homes filled with illegal dumping - mostly plastic and glass bottles. This makes the community less safe and reduces our quality of life. And as I connect with fellow community members - hearing their concerns about family members with asthma or wanting to feel proud about their community - or wanting to spend less time cleaning up litter and more time enjoying time with their families — i see trash trucks on their way to the city landfill - that's also in south baltimore...that's where the burnt ash with all the leftovers from those burnt bottles ends up.

This is what a failed waste system - one that only knows how to burn and bury and dump feels like when you're up close to it everyday. It's not safe, it feels terrible and it smells like burning plastic.

But Maryland has a choice. By choosing the Bottle Bill we can do a lot for environmental justice communities like mine in South Baltimore. It's a logical part of a system approach to our failed waste system that also includes - it won't change my everyday experience overnight - but it will reduce the number of bottles dumped in my community, it will reduce the amount of toxic plastic waste i'm breathing in and exposed to in my environment. And for me - that's a great choice for Maryland and for our shared health and environment.

Sincerely,

*Carlos Sanchez*

South Baltimore Community Land Trust  
[www.sbclt.org](http://www.sbclt.org)

**HB735\_LWVMD\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Casey Hunter

Position: FAV



**Testimony to the House Environment and Transportation Committee**

**HB 735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

**POSITION: Support**

**By: Linda T. Kohn, President**

**Date: February 28, 2024**

Since the emergence of the environment movement in the 1970's, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes in expanding reuse and recycling efforts, and is an active proponent of national beverage container deposit programs.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports HB 735**, which would establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, a beverage container deposit program to increase recycling and reduce litter pollution. Under this program, Marylanders would receive a 10-15 cent refund for each beverage container they return for recycling.

Recycling refund programs are proven to boost recycling rates and reduce litter. These programs also work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as they reduce the demand for virgin plastic production. Plastic products are made using fossil fuels - which have been established as a leading driver of the climate crisis. Maryland has established goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2031 and reach net-zero by 2045. **HB 735** would help the state achieve these goals by reducing our reliance on virgin plastic production.

**HB 735** would benefit the environment, and benefit all Marylanders. Expanding Maryland's recycling efforts is critical in order to protect the health of our communities, maintain the quality of our environment, and mitigate the climate crisis.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **strongly urges a favorable report on HB 735.**



# **HB0735 Beverage Container and Litter Reduction Pro**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## TESTIMONY FOR HB0735

### Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Terrasa

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0735 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill, if enacted, creates the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund Program, beginning operation in January 2027. It will require -

- A small deposit added to the price of glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers (10¢-15¢)
- A refund of the deposit when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling

The program is implemented and financed by beverage producers and will have enforceable targets and strong oversight from Maryland Department of the Environment. It is expected that Maryland can recover  $\geq 90\%$  of beverage containers with 3.5 billion fewer wasted containers/year as well as an overall reduction in litter and reduced costs to local governments. Additionally, it incentivizes investment in refillable beverage containers and increases availability of high-quality, food-grade materials.

This is clearly a direction that we should be going in. Our members support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

# **HB 735 oral testimony of Anacostia Watetshed Socie**

Uploaded by: Christopher Williams

Position: FAV



**Oral Testimony of  
Christopher E. Williams, President and CEO  
Anacostia Watershed Society  
to the  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
HB 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling  
Refund and Litter Reduction Program  
February 28, 2024**

**Good afternoon. I am testifying today on behalf of the thousands of members, supporters and volunteers of the Anacostia Watershed Society in Prince George's and Montgomery County, Maryland.**

**Five point two billion single use beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year. That's an average of over 14 million plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass bottles purchased, used, and disposed of every day. That is a lot of waste that has to go**

somewhere. Well, at least that stuff is recyclable, huh? That's a relief.

But, unfortunately, it isn't, because despite curbside pick-up, less than a quarter of all that trash is actually captured for recycling. The rest, 4 billion otherwise recyclable containers, never get into the recycling stream. For those keeping score, that's almost 2 bottles and cans per each of Maryland's 6.2 million residents *per day, every day*, going to rapidly filling, often leaking landfills, to incinerators to be burned into toxic air pollution, or into our neighborhood streets, parks, and rivers.

This plastic trash pollutes public spaces and fouls wildlife habitat, interfering with foraging, feeding, and other behaviors.

Moreover, as the plastic trash decomposes, it breaks down into microplastics that persist in the environment for many years.

Studies on the impact of microplastics and nanoplastics on fish and mussel species have found damaged digestive and reproductive systems, and an increased chance of mortality. And there is increasing and frightening evidence that humans are

**ingesting more plastic every day, the damaging health effects of which are only beginning to be understood.**

**This is an environmental and impending public health crisis that needs to be forcefully addressed without delay. I can assure you that the much discussed, pending Recycling Needs Assessment will not provide a more effective and efficient solution than the type of deposit return/recycle system laid out in HB 735 that has dramatically increased recycling rates in 10 U.S. states and across Europe. We have decades of data to demonstrate these systems reduce pollution and are remarkably cost effective. My colleagues on the panel will explain how it all works. AWS strongly supports HB 735 and urges the Committee to favorably report out the bill.**

**Thank you.**

# **HB 735 written testimony from Anacostia Watershed**

Uploaded by: Christopher Williams

Position: FAV



Testimony of  
Christopher E. Williams, President and CEO  
Anacostia Watershed Society  
to the  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
HB 0735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling  
Refund and Litter Reduction Program  
February 28, 2024

Good afternoon. I am testifying today on behalf of the 10,000 members, supporters and volunteers of the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS). The Anacostia watershed is a 176 square mile area drained by the Anacostia River, two-thirds of which is in Prince George's and Montgomery counties in Maryland. The mission of AWS is to protect and restore the Anacostia watershed for all who live here and for future generations.

Of all the threats to river health that plague the Anacostia watershed – sewage overflows, toxic pollutants, urban run-off, sedimentation, wetlands and forest loss – the most starkly visible is trash. Particularly after a heavy rain, thousands of pounds of trash flows from streets, parking lots, and storm drains into streams across the watershed and ultimately into the river's mainstem. Every visitor to the river has seen the result, every eddy and small inlet cluttered with food wrappers, chip bags, single use plastic cups and lids, straws, and plastic beverage bottles. Of all the trash collected by AWS trash traps, which are designed to intercept trash flowing into the river, by far the most ubiquitous piece of trash is the plastic beverage bottle. This trash fouls wildlife habitat, interfering with foraging, feeding, and other behaviors, and is sometimes ingested by wildlife. Moreover, the data suggest that over 70% of the pieces of trash flushed into the river will ultimately sink beneath the surface, raising troubling questions about just how much plastic waste is accumulating on the riverbed and in the water column, and how much that unseen trash is affecting the fish, wildlife and plants of the Anacostia River ecosystem.

In addition, plastic bottles and other trash foul natural areas important to people. The 176 square mile Anacostia watershed is entirely urban and suburban, and many of the parks and green spaces in Prince George's and Montgomery County are along streams and creeks in the watershed. These spaces foster social interaction, exercise, play, and provide places to get away from the noise and bustle of the city. There is a growing body of evidence that access to urban



green spaces is vitally important for our mental, physical, social, and emotional health.<sup>1</sup> Specific benefits include a higher reported quality of life, lower stress, better mood, and a reduction in mental distress. However, the benefits of urban green space are diminished if the green space itself is stressful or unpleasant to be in. Visible litter makes the environment less inviting, and reduces these benefits.

As the plastic trash decomposes, microscopic pieces are chipped off. These microplastics persist in the environment for many years, and we are only beginning to learn about their potential negative impacts. For example, a study on the impact of microplastics on fish found damaged digestive and reproductive systems, and an increased chance of mortality.<sup>2</sup> Mussels, organisms essential to the health of the Anacostia watershed, can also be highly impacted by microplastics. Several studies from other watersheds have found that mussel populations exposed to microplastics suffer from reduced reproductive success, which reduces the resiliency of the population in the face of other challenges of living in an urban river.<sup>3</sup> In other words, microplastics can have cascading health effects for the organisms and populations exposed to them including, potentially, humans. In fact, studies show that humans are ingesting more and more micro- and nano-plastics, and the damaging health effects are only just beginning to be understood.<sup>4</sup>

Five point two billion single use beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year.<sup>5</sup> That is an average of over 14 million plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass bottles purchased, used, and disposed of every day. However, despite curbside pick-up, **less than a quarter of all that trash is actually captured for recycling**. The rest, 4 billion otherwise recyclable containers, never get into the recycling stream. That is almost 2 bottles and cans per each of Maryland's 6.2 million residents **per day, every day**, going to rapidly filling, often leaking landfills, to incinerators to be burned into toxic air pollution, or into our neighborhood streets, parks, and rivers.

In AWS's corner of Maryland, the dedicated volunteers of AWS have removed on average about 42 tons of trash per year from the stream and wetlands of the Anacostia watershed since 1989. Today, almost 60% of that trash by weight is plastic bottles. We're proud of our clean-up efforts, but we can only round up a small fraction of the millions of beverage containers that foul the watershed so thoroughly that it is one of only three bodies of water in the U.S. that must be regulated for trash under the federal Clean Water Act (TMDL).

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<sup>1</sup> Numerous studies support this conclusion. See <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-021-10474-7/tables/2>

<sup>2</sup> Buyun. Md Simul, *Effects of Microplastics on Fish and Human Health*, *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, vol. 10, March 2022

<sup>3</sup> Scherer, Christian et al, *Interactions of Microplastics with Freshwater Biota*, *The Handbook of Environmental Chemistry* vol. 58

<sup>4</sup> Kieran D. Cox, Garth A. Covernton, Hailey L. Davies, John F. Dower, Francis Juanes, Sarah E. Dudas, *Human Consumption of Microplastics*, *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 2019, 53, 12, 7068–7074, June 5, 2019

<sup>5</sup> Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Marketing Data, 2019

AWS believes that HB 0735 will significantly reduce litter and plastic pollution in the Anacostia and in all of Maryland's rivers and streams. Data from other jurisdictions that have implemented such programs are encouraging. In 6 of the 10 states with recycling/refund laws, researchers have examined the impact of the recycling/refund program on litter found on highways. These states— Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Vermont, and New York— have seen a 40-80% decrease in container litter, which contributed to a 10-39% reduction in total litter.<sup>6</sup>

Data from river cleanups in Massachusetts, another recycling/refund state, suggest that their program has a substantial impact on the amount of litter in rivers, streams, and wetlands as well. In Massachusetts, only containers holding carbonated drinks (beer, malt, carbonated soft drinks) and mineral water were eligible to be returned. Beverage market share data showed that deposit eligible containers made up 76% of sales, and non-deposit eligible containers were 24% of sales. Yet data collected from river clean-ups revealed that deposit eligible containers made up only 19% of the containers collected and non-deposit containers made up 81%. The evidence strongly suggests that the incentive provided by the recycling/refund program in Massachusetts routed the bulk of eligible beverage containers to reuse and recycling, while containers with no such incentive littered the riverbanks.<sup>7</sup>

We are facing not just a “litter” problem in Maryland. This is an environmental and impending public health crisis that needs to be forcefully addressed without delay. The much discussed, pending Recycling Needs Assessment will not provide a more effective and efficient solution than the type of deposit return/recycle system laid out in HB 735 that has dramatically increased recycling rates in 10 U.S. states and across Europe. In fact, it has been demonstrated that return recycle incentive systems work and in hand and indeed are a necessary part of Extended Producer Responsibility programs. As stated above, in Maryland less than 25% of recyclable beverage containers are captured for recycling; in deposit/return states, that figure is 60% and higher, sometimes much higher. And we have decades of data to demonstrate these systems reduce pollution and are remarkably cost effective. There is no reason to delay and every reason to get deposit/return in place as soon as possible. AWS strongly supports HB 0735 and urges the Committee to favorably report out the bill.

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<sup>6</sup> Schuyler, Qamar et al, *Economic incentives reduce plastic inputs to the ocean*, Marine Policy, vol. 96, pp 250-255

<sup>7</sup> Cohen, Russ, Worcester Earth Day Cleanup, April 2003; Cohen, Russ, Blackstone Valley Riverways Clean Up Day, October 2007, Massachusetts Riverways Program. See [bottlebill.org](http://bottlebill.org)

**Testimony HB735 Ramos (1).pdf**  
Uploaded by: Councilwoman Odette Ramos  
Position: FAV



**Odette Ramos**

**Baltimore City Councilwoman**

**District 14**

(410) 396 - 4814

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100 N. Holliday Street, Room 506

Baltimore MD 21202

**Testimony**  
**HB0735 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**  
**February 26, 2024**

**FAVORABLE**

Honorable Chair Korman and Distinguished Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to urge your support of HB0735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

HB0735 is an important bill that would provide Maryland with the ability to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce the litter and pollution. It will allow jurisdictions to create our own programs to ensure that residents can return bottles and cans to redeem their deposit. It will also prohibit a producer from selling, offering, or distributing into Maryland a redeemable beverage container unless they have taken the necessary and appropriate steps with the Department of the Environment.

In Baltimore, we are working to reduce the use of the BRESCO trash incinerator and help our efforts in diverting waste from the landfills. This will also provide our City Council with the ability to create our own bottle recycling program—something that the Council has been wanting to implement since the 2013 bottle bill. Having the bottle bill in Baltimore City will incentivize cleaning up our streets and ensuring there is less waste in our landfills and incinerators.

Please issue a favorable report for HB0735.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos  
Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

# **HB735\_IndivisibleHoCoMD\_FAV\_Konny.pdf**

Uploaded by: Crystal Konny

Position: FAV



## HB735 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Testimony before House Environment & Transportation Committee  
February 28, 2024

**Position: Favorable**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB735**, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Terrasa and her colleagues for sponsoring this important legislation.

The bill establishes a program that will collect a small deposit for each bottle purchased. The deposits will be refunded when the container is returned to the retailer or a redemption facility. Retailers and redemption facilities receive a handling fee for processing the returned bottles. The program will be self-financing, creating no new costs for the taxpayers.

Approximately 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, and fewer than a quarter are recycled. Three-quarters of the beverage containers end up as litter, or are incinerated or dumped in landfills. Containers that are left in the wild are very problematic. Such containers, especially plastic ones, are harmful to both the environment and to wildlife, particularly in marine environments like the Chesapeake Bay.

This legislation will increase the source of recycled materials for use in new bottles, and will work hand in hand with HB168, Maryland's Postconsumer Recycled Content Program bill which will stimulate the demand for materials to be recycled.

Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs. The states with a 10-cent deposit, such as Michigan and Oregon, have a 90% recycling rate. It would be fantastic if Maryland could say the same.

I live in a neighborhood of houses, townhomes, and garden apartments. The view from my home includes a drainage ditch that shortly leads to the Middle Patuxent River and, eventually, to the Chesapeake Bay. Litter washes up in this ditch, including many beverage containers. This bill would give the neighbors an incentive to keep the bottles out of the ditch, keeping Maryland's waterways and neighborhoods cleaner.

For all of these reasons, we urge you to pass the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. It is long-overdue. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.**

Crystal Konny  
Columbia, MD 21046

**HB 735 testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Debbie Cohn

Position: FAV

**Committees:** Environment and Transportation; Economic Matters  
**Testimony on:** HB735-Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program  
**Submitting:** Deborah A. Cohn  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2024

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for considering this testimony. HB735 would establish a recycling refund program for beverage containers under which customers pay a deposit when purchasing beverage bottles and receive the deposit back when returning the container to a source of sale.

**Problem:** About 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold each year in Maryland. Only 1.2 billion (23%) are captured for recycling. Four billion containers a year are left in the environment. Many are littered along roadsides and in waterways, with local communities having to pay to collect and dispose of them properly. I see this every time I walk or jog. Regardless of the route I take, I find beverage containers strewn in the gutter, near playing fields, and along roadways. I often come back with 8-10 discarded beverage containers. This litter would stop with a deposit/refund beverage container bill.

**Solution:** HB735 would establish a Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce litter and their associated costs to local governments and Maryland's waterways. Purchasers of beverage containers would be charged a deposit which would be refundable upon return to any point of sale.

Refundable deposit bottle bills work. They significantly increase the percentage of beverage bottles that are returned for reuse. The ten states<sup>1</sup> with recycling refund programs have 50% less litter than other states. States with a 10-cent deposit have achieved beverage container recycling rates of 90%. Beverage bottle deposit and refund programs save counties and taxpayers money since jurisdictions do not need to collect and process littered beverage containers or fund as many litter collection programs in their streams and waterways. Any deposit fees that are never redeemed pay for the reverse vending machines and other costs of administering the program.

I first experienced the impact of modern refund/deposit bill when I visited Munich for several days. I was taking our used beverage containers to a recycling bin in a nearby park when I met a pensioner collecting beverage containers littering the park. As we spoke about what she was doing, she took me to a nearby market, showed me the reverse vending machine, demonstrated how it worked and then took the deposit slip from the vending machine to collect cash from the check-out counter. People on a limited income will be motivated to return strewn beverage containers on which they did not pay the deposit fee.

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<sup>1</sup> CA, CT, HI, IA, ME, MA, MI, NY, OR, VT.



For these reasons I urge the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report for this sensible bill – HB735.

Thank you.

Deborah A. Cohn

# **HB0735 Letter of Support - Constellium SE\_02.26.24**

Uploaded by: Delphine Dahan Kocher

Position: FAV



300 East Lombard Street, 17th floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
(443) 420 7881

February 26, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Support for House Bill 735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

I am writing to convey our strong support for House Bill 735.

Constellium is a global industry leader in the production and recycling of aluminum products, with its U.S. headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. We supply the packaging, automotive, and aerospace markets, and recycle both scrap and used beverage cans (UBCs). We are a public company, listed on the New York Stock Exchange, with 12,000 employees and over \$7.5 billion in revenue.

As a company that recycles just in the United States more than 20 billion beverage cans a year, the availability of scrap is critical to our operations. We manufacture aluminum cansheet that our customers use to produce cans for popular beverages such as Coke, Pepsi, and Budweiser, and our products currently include more than 70% recycled content. We strive to promote the circularity of our products by recycling used cans and transforming them into new ones. Ensuring a steady supply of UBCs is one of our top priorities, and we use UBCs from across the United States.

Using recycled cans instead of primary aluminum also allows us to significantly decrease our CO2 emissions, one of our key public commitments in terms of sustainability, and one that our customers and investors follow closely. Recycling aluminum emits 94% fewer emissions than

producing primary metal. Without recycled aluminum, our carbon emissions would increase by close to 50%, while today we committed to decrease them by 30% in 2030.

Unfortunately, at around 45%, the overall recycling rate for UBCs in the U.S. is still quite low. With demand for product packaged in aluminum cans expected to increase significantly, cansheet producers like Constellium will be forced to rely increasingly on primary aluminum, much of which is imported. By itself, HB 735 will have a measurable impact on the availability of recycled UBCs as data from the United States and globally proves that deposits are the most effective way to increase recycling. And if other states follow, we will be able do better as a country.

HB 735 would also contribute to Maryland's economy, in addition to protecting the environment. The aluminum can recycling rate in Maryland is currently around 23% according to the 2024 State of Recycling Report from the Recycling Partnership. Concretely, this means that close to 1 billion cans are being sent to landfill every year. If we were to recycle them instead, and reach a 90% rate, we would generate around \$20 million of additional revenue for the State of Maryland in addition to reducing waste.

Thank you for your willingness to take on this important issue and thank you to Delegate Terrasa for sponsoring the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Dahan-Kocher', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delphine Dahan-Kocher

Delphine Dahan-Kocher

VP Group Communications and Public Affairs North America

Constellium

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# **letter of support for Bottle Bill.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dia Costello

Position: FAV

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



**Letter of Support HB735.pdf**

Uploaded by: Evan Glass

Position: FAV





**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

Hon. Delegate Marc Korman  
Environment and Transportation Committee, Chair  
Room 251, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 26, 2024

Dear Delegate Korman,

Thank you for your work in Annapolis on behalf of Montgomery County residents. We appreciate your partnership in our shared goal to forge a greener, more sustainable future for all. We are writing in **support of the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act, HB 735 / SB 642.**

Each year across Maryland, 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold but only 23% of those plastic bottles are recycled - the remaining 4 billion containers are left in landfills, as litter, or are incinerated. Annual stormwater reports for Montgomery County indicate that close to 40% of all waste in our waterways are made up of plastic bottles.

HB 735 would incentivize residents to recycle more plastic bottles and ensure that plastic bottles sold in Maryland are made with a higher percentage of recycled materials. It would also reduce incineration of wasted beverage containers and divert them from landfills, as the County continues to move away from incineration to embrace the principles of zero waste.

Passing HB 735 would follow ten states that have already implemented similar legislation, the earliest enacted in 1970. Those programs with a 10-cent deposit per container have achieved 90% recycling rates and reductions in beverage container litter on land and in waterways.

We believe that this program would greatly benefit Montgomery County's efforts to divert waste from the Dickerson incinerator and prevent litter from reaching our waterways. Please support HB 735 to ensure that Maryland and Montgomery County remain national leaders in environmental stewardship and waste reduction.

Sincerely,

Evan Glass  
Chair, Transportation and Environment Committee

Marilyn Balcombe  
Councilmember, District 2

Kate Stewart  
Councilmember, District 4

**MD Catholic Conference\_HB 735\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 28, 2024

**HB 735**

**Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

**House Environment & Transportation Committee  
House Economic Matters Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 735. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 735 would establish a Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Fund and Litter Reduction Program within the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), administered by the Office of Recycling. The purpose of the program is to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers in the State.

This legislation establishes a framework for "producers" and "beverage container stewardship organizations" to develop and implement beverage container stewardship plans. Plans would be submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment for approval. A grant program would be formulated to support the goals of the program, provisions for redemption facilities, an advisory council, and enforcement provisions.

In his encyclical letter "Laudato Si'," Pope Francis reminds us of our sacred duty to safeguard the Earth, our common home, and to preserve its beauty and resources for present and future generations. Beverage container waste in particular poses a significant threat to the integrity of creation, contaminating our oceans, rivers, and landscapes, and endangering the health of wildlife and ecosystems. As custodians of God's creation, we are called to take decisive action to address this ecological crisis and restore harmony to the natural world.

Plastic bottled water consumption in particular continues to contribute to environmental degradation and exacerbate the global water crisis. This legislation would promote a significant reduction in plastic bottle pollution and promote a partnership to reduce the same with those whose business endeavors perpetuate their distribution and use. The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 735

# Written Sponsor Testimony HB735.pdf

Uploaded by: Jen Terrasa

Position: FAV

JEN TERRASA  
Legislative District 13  
Howard County

Environment and Transportation  
Committee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families



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The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 28, 2024

To: The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Delegate Jen Terrasa  
District 13, Howard County

Re: Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB735, Maryland Beverage Container  
Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

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Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB735, which establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program – a.k.a. the Maryland Bottle Bill – to reduce the volume of litter and plastic pollution from beverage containers. The program will also divert containers from landfills and incinerators and increase recycling.

This is a reintroduction of HB1089 from last year, but we have made significant changes to the bill after considering feedback from multiple stakeholders.

**The Problem**

In 2019, 5.2 billion beverage containers were sold in Maryland, 863 containers per person per year. It is estimated that 1.2 billion of them, only 23% of the total containers sold, were collected for recycling. That means that every year around 4 billion beverage containers become waste, ending up in landfills, incinerators, or littering our environment.

Single-use beverage containers are one of the most common items littered across the State. They are more than half of the litter in trash traps on the Anacostia River. Most of these wasted containers are made of plastic. They are polluting our waterways and posing a risk to wildlife and our health. They break into tiny pieces that are ingested by

marine life, causing sickness and death. These small plastic particles are in our food and our bodies.

Maryland's beverage container litter problem is so severe that the Environmental Protection Agency declared the Anacostia watershed to be impaired with trash in 2010, and in 2014 did the same for the watershed surrounding Baltimore Harbor. Our state, which is home to the largest estuary in the country – the Chesapeake Bay – also has the dubious distinction of having two of the three water bodies in the country that are impaired for trash and regulated by the EPA under the Clean Water Act.

The 4 billion wasted containers annually not only contribute to litter and plastic pollution – they are also a waste of energy and resources. Rather than conserve and reusing those wasted materials, new beverage containers are being manufactured from virgin materials that generate greenhouse gas emissions at every stage of their life cycle, from extraction to production and disposal, with climate, health, and environmental justice impacts.

### **What the bill does**

HB735 would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a refundable deposit of 10 cents for metal, plastic, and glass beverage containers 24 fluid ounces or less and 15 cents for beverage containers more than 24 fluid ounces.

Distributors of beverage containers collect the deposit when they deliver their products to a retailer for sale, and the retailer gets refunded for the deposit when a customer purchases the beverage. The customer gets their deposit refunded when they return the container for recycling.

The deposit would be refunded to customers when the redeemable beverage container is returned for recycling at convenient redemption opportunities for customers, mainly at retailers that sell redeemable beverage containers. Think of this as “buying the beverage but borrowing the container.” The deposit ensures that the empty container is returned.

Restaurants and other hospitality businesses where beverages are consumed on the premises would pay the deposit on the redeemable containers they purchase. The deposit is not passed on to customers – it is refunded directly from the system operator to the business when the empty containers are returned.

Both retailers and hospitality businesses would receive a “handling fee” per container to pay for the cost of collection, sorting, and storing of redeemable containers.

The metal, glass, and plastic raw materials are sold on the market to be used to make new beverage containers, and the revenue is put back into the program. Use of the high-

grade materials recovered from the redeemed beverage containers displaces the production of beverage containers that are using virgin resources, reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

### **How it would work**

**The program would be implemented by a non-profit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization (BCSO)** selected by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). All beverage producers selling or distributing beverages in redeemable containers in the state would have to register with MDE, belong to and finance the BCSO. Responsibilities of the BCSO include:

- Submitting a Stewardship Plan for organizing and implementing the program, according to provisions in HB735 and as established in rulemaking;
- Submitting annual reports, with the information prescribed in HB735;
- Putting in place and financing the necessary infrastructure;
- Collecting and processing empty redeemed containers from retailers and other redemption sites;
- Managing the deposits; and
- Achieving three main targets:
  - Putting in place all convenience standards set by December 2026;
  - A 90% redemption rate and 85% recycling rate of beverage containers by the fifth year of operation; and
  - A target of 10% of all beverage containers sold in the state to be reusable/refillable by December 2034.

**MDE would provide substantial oversight of the BCSO.** Besides selecting the stewardship organization, it would:

- Set producer registration fees at a level that will fully compensate for costs incurred by MDE for oversight;
- Approve the Stewardship Plan submitted by the BCSO;
- Set the convenience standard for customer access to redemption points;
- Set handling fees per container paid to retailers to cover their collection and sorting costs, and for restaurants and hospitality businesses, to cover preliminary sorting;
- Develop a process for local governments to set up their own redemption points, if they want to, and receive a handling fee;
- Enforce and audit operations; and
- Appoint and consult with an Advisory Council of stakeholders on approval of the stewardship plan, annual reports, and implementation issues.

**The program would establish a Grant Fund** for developing refill/reuse programs, funded by some of the unclaimed deposits and managed by MDE.

**Retailers with more than 3,000 sf of retail space that sell redeemable beverage containers and have at least 150 square feet of shelf space displaying redeemable containers** would be required to receive empty containers for redemption and to refund the deposits. There are many options to satisfy this obligation:

- Reverse vending machines that verify, count, and redeem empty containers, and issue a receipt for the amount that can be refunded by the retailer at checkout;
- Bag drops located in the parking lot where customers can leave all of their empty containers in a bag labeled with a personal bar code, and receive a refund into a personal account;
- Shared redemption facilities among several co-located retailers;
- The ability to collaborate with any nearby redemption center set up by the BCSO to satisfy the convenience standard, in lieu of on-site redemption.

**The program would be self-financed**, by registration and BCSO producer fees, sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. The program would be budget-neutral for the State.

**The deposit would go into effect on January 1, 2027.** Deposits on beverage containers have been enacted in 10 other states and have been ongoing for as long as 50 years. Those programs typically reduced beverage container litter by 70-85%. For those with a 10-cent deposit, 90% of containers have been returned for recycling, compared with only about a quarter of containers returned currently in Maryland.

### **The benefits of HB735**

- Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution: The program would remove at least 200,000 tons of plastic, aluminum, and glass containers from the environment, including 2 billion plastic bottles.
- Increased recovery of beverage containers for recycling: Based on experience in the other states with bottle bills, a 10-cent deposit, would achieve a 90% recycling rate for covered beverage containers, compared with the current recovery rate of only about a quarter in Maryland.
- Increased high-quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers. When the targets are achieved, the program will generate an additional 11,305 tons of aluminum, 44,066 tons of PET plastic, 3,207 tons of HDPE plastic, and 140,923 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers. The resources this bill provides supports the efforts of my companion legislation, HB168, the Postconsumer Recycled Content Program bill. That bill creates demand for food-grade recycled content for beverage and food containers by requiring a certain percentage of recycled content in plastic containers sold in Maryland.
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program



would eliminate 195,000 metric tons of CO2 equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 42,000 cars.

- Job creation. Increased recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times more jobs in collection, sorting, and transporting from increased recycling than are created by garbage collection, hauling, landfilling, or incineration. Maintenance of reverse vending machines and investments in the reuse/refill systems will also create new job opportunities.
  - In Massachusetts, which has a similar program and population size as Maryland, there have already been 600 jobs created in redemption centers along with hundreds more created in processing and secondary manufacturing.
  - HB735 complements local curbside/single-stream recycling, which will continue to collect beverage containers that customers choose not to redeem, larger beverage containers that are not part of the program, and other residential recyclables.
- Reduced costs for local governments. Local governments will realize potentially substantial cost savings from the Maryland Bottle Bill. They will not have to pay for the collection, transport, or tipping fees for the three quarters of beverage containers that are currently trashed or burned, and will have lower costs for litter collection.
  - Diversion of glass bottles from curbside programs will also save collection costs for a material that in the single-stream system often is low value, creates wear and tear on the machinery, and a source of contamination.
  - While these programs typically reduce costs for local government, for the first two years of the program there would be compensation for net losses from the overall waste management program that can be attributed to the program.
  - Local governments are not involved in implementation or enforcement of the program, but may set up their own redemption facilities and receive a handling fee per container under this program.
- Investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems. Deposits are critical to the development of refillable and reusable containers.

## **Conclusion**

Maryland is facing a plastic pollution crisis that is impacting our health and the environment. Beverage container litter is a major contributor. Based on decades of experience from bottle bills in other jurisdictions, HB735 will substantially reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It will also increase the quality of recycled material for closed loop recycling and provide for a transition from single-use to reusable/refillable containers. These are the unique impacts of deposit programs.

It is also important to pass legislation to reduce packaging, redesign hard-to-recycle packaging for recyclability, reduce its toxicity, and make producers responsible for these outcomes, as laid out in HB168. The two bills complement each other, but only one of them, HB735, is already proven to be effective and if passed this year can be underway in 2-3 years' time.

We do **not** need to wait for the Recycling Needs Assessment that was passed as part of last year's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging bill. We already know Maryland has a plastic pollution and litter crisis; Bottle Bills are a proven and effective solution for reducing beverage container litter; and the Recycling Needs Assessment will **not** analyze litter issues. It will be important for developing an EPR for Packaging program with respect to the recycling system; it does not include an assessment of programs to reduce litter. The Bottle Bill is a proven policy that will reduce litter and help recover easy-to-recycle beverage containers. This leaves the EPR for Packaging Program to focus on reducing diverse types of packaging and making hard-to-recycle packaging more recyclable. Almost all places that have adopted an EPR for Packaging program have independent bottle bills.

**We need to stop kicking the can down the road and pass the Maryland Bottle Bill now.** We already know how to reduce beverage container litter and the plastic pollution associated with it. This doesn't require additional information. Every year we wait, another 4 billion beverage containers are entering the environment.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB735.

Attachment: Changes to the Maryland Bottle Bill since 2023

## **Here are the main changes that have been made in the Maryland Bottle Bill since last session:**

### MDE:

- (1) Start-up costs charged to the General Fund will be totally reimbursed retroactively in the first year's program registration fee, so that the bill has zero impact on the State budget
- (2) The timeline for preparing the program was extended by one year, from 18 to 30 months.
- (3) The program will be administered by a single Beverage Container Stewardship Organization instead of the possibility of multiple BCSOs, to make it simpler for MDE oversight. MDE must advertise and select the BCSO, and there are new provisions in the case that the BCSO or the Stewardship Plan is revoked.

### Retailers

- (1) Private label owners will not be considered producers if they can identify another entity that has agreed in writing to accept responsibility.
- (2) Retailers <3,000 sf of sales area or <150 square feet of shelf space displaying redeemable beverage containers will not be required to accept empty containers for redemption and return of deposits.
  - a. The only exception is if the retailer sells beverages in containers that are too small to be accepted by an RVM (e.g. miniature liquor bottles, or "nips"). They will have to refund the deposits for those small beverage containers.
  - b. All of these retailers must post at their entrance the nearest place where customers can go to redeem their containers at an RVM for immediate refund.
- (3) Many different options are explained in the bill for retailers to meet their obligations in the program

### Restaurants and the hospitality industry:

- (1) The bill more fully explains the obligations of restaurants (etc) under the bill: they must pay the deposit on redeemable beverage containers purchased for their business but will not pass the cost onto customers. They may get their deposits back by providing the empties to the stewardship organization.
- (2) The stewardship organization is responsible for financing any receptacles in which the empty containers will be placed and for picking them up and transporting them.
- (3) Restaurants (etc.) will receive a small per container "materials handling fee" for collecting and preliminary sorting of the beverage containers provided to the stewardship organization.

### Grant Fund

- (1) The objective of reducing the volume of beverage containers sold in the state was replaced by an objective to increase availability of public water fountains and refill stations in the State, as an alternative to bottled water.

- (2) The target in Sec. 9-1736 of 10% refillable beverage containers by the end of 2033 has been tweaked to clarify that this is an *aggregate* target across all producers, not a target that each producer would have to meet.

Other

- (1) The list of sources of financing for the program was previously incomplete. Revenue from sale of raw materials and the stewardship organization fees paid by the producers have both been added as a source of financing. Revenue from the sale of raw materials is now sent to the BCSO instead of the individual producers, to be folded back into the program.
- (2) The covered containers have been expanded to include metal containers, which would include not only aluminum containers but steel or bimetal beverage containers as well.

# **HB735\_City of Riverdale Park\_FAV**

Uploaded by: Jessica Barnes

Position: FAV

# TOWN OF RIVERDALE PARK

March 5, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Support of House Bill 735 (Senate Bill 642) Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Mayor and Council of the Town of Riverdale Park support House Bill 735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. HB 735 would establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce the litter, pollution, and costs associated with beverage containers; prohibit a producer from selling, offering for sale, or distributing in or importing into the State a redeemable beverage container unless the producer is registered with the Department of the Environment, pays a certain fee, and is part of a certain stewardship organization.

The Town of Riverdale Park is committed to sustainability and understands that achieving sustainability requires private and public action. The Town supports the intent of the legislation to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and to reduce the litter, pollution, and costs associated with beverage containers.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important legislation. If you require any additional information, please contact me at [akthompson@riverdaleparkmd.gov](mailto:akthompson@riverdaleparkmd.gov).

Sincerely,



Alan K. Thompson  
Mayor

**WDC 2024 Testimony\_HB735\_FINAL.pdf**

Uploaded by: JoAnne Koravos

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

[www.womensdemocraticclub.org](http://www.womensdemocraticclub.org)

**House Bill HB 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund  
and Litter Reduction Program  
Environment and Transportation Committee – February 28, 2024  
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2024 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

**WDC urges the passage of HB 735.** Every year in Maryland, around [four billion beverage containers end up in the landfill](#), littering the parks and watersheds, or even worse they will end up as pollution in the air after being incinerated. [Plastic bottles break into microplastics that are consumed by wildlife, and end up in our food and water, causing health issues for humans as well as animals.](#)

House Bill 735 would create a container deposit return system that will reduce litter and plastic pollution in Maryland's rivers and watersheds, increase water quality and create green jobs in Maryland. [Container deposit return systems have been implemented successfully in dozens of jurisdictions across the world.](#)

House Bill 735 would incentivize residents to return containers, including plastic bottles, which would reduce incineration of plastic containers and divert them from landfills. HB 735 will not just increase the number of containers that are returned for recycling, but will also create a higher quality of recycled material which significantly increases the likelihood that the container is actually used to manufacture a new product, versus [single-stream recycling](#) where all recyclables are mixed in together resulting in residues and contamination.

With HB 735, Maryland can create a robust and effective container deposit return system that will protect the environment and the economy. Every year we wait, another four billion beverage containers enter our environment. We need to act now.

**We ask for your support for HB 735 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.** Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Tazeen Ahmad  
WDC President

Elisabeth Liisi Fidler  
WDC Subcommittee on the  
Environment

Cynthia Rubenstein  
Chair, WDC Advocacy



**BaltimoreCounty\_FAV\_HB0735.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Olszewski

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI JR.

*County Executive*

JENNIFER AIOSA

*Director of Government Affairs*

AMANDA KONTZ CARR

*Legislative Officer*

WILLIAM J. THORNE

*Legislative Associate*

**BILL NO.:**           **HB 735**

**TITLE:**               Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

**SPONSOR:**         Delegate Terrasa

**COMMITTEE:**     House Environment and Transportation

**POSITION:**       **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**             February 28, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** HB 735 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program as a common-sense approach to boosting recycling rates and saving valuable landfill space across Maryland.

Baltimore County currently supports residential recycling by offering curbside pick-up of recyclables in our most populous communities. These materials are then brought to a County-operated Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) where they are sorted, baled and sold to third parties for further processing or reuse. This process provides a modest revenue stream for the County to run the facility and continue offering curbside recyclables collection.

However, we know that even with residential recycling, as a County, we are not capturing all recyclable materials generated by businesses, multi-family housing, or residents outside of our current curbside service area. HB735 creates a mechanism by which these other recyclable materials can be captured. Increasing rates of capture for recyclable materials, whether through our own MRF or a Statewide container refund will benefit Baltimore County’s municipal landfill by diverting these materials and reduce litter along our roadways and riverbanks.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB735 from the House Environment and Transportation Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).

**HB0735\_Merryman\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jon Merryman

Position: FAV

Hello representatives,

You know where I stand on this. And I think I know where you stand too. I've been cleaning up an exponentially increasing amount of plastics and garbage all over Central Maryland (and more recently, all over the country) ... for 15 years now. And I've been calling for the deposit/refund system here in Maryland for at least the last eight years. And what I've learned, experienced, and accomplished – having cleaned up garbage in over 10% of the 3143 counties in the United States (and in several other countries), now approaching one million pounds of garbage total, should provide you with insights most people cannot offer.

It's time. It's past time. I'm including a few photos I hope you'll share with any of your colleagues you think might be undecided at this point. For the most part, these bottles enter our waterways via the storm drains and quickly make their way to our creeks, rivers, and the bay. And for the most part, they remain hidden from view, unless you look for them, like I do.

In 2021, I did a 24-hour dash across Maryland to fill a garbage bag in each Maryland county (plus Baltimore City - 24 total) in under 24 hours. It was too easy. It only took 19 hours and 48 minutes to accomplish the task with over 500 miles of driving. Bottles and cans make for quick filling of a large garbage bag.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3ISYOIJiF4>

I attempted the same feat in Vermont and New Hampshire in 2022 - also 24 counties. You may be aware that Vermont has a deposit / refund system in place, whereas New Hampshire does not. It was like night and day. I spent so much time bagging wispy little napkins, wrappers, and the like in Vermont - I couldn't find more than a few bottles or cans anywhere, and it took me over 28 hours to complete that two-state, 24-county challenge. So I know firsthand the difference that this legislation can make. I've seen it. I've lived and breathed and sweated through its results. It flat out works.

The photos below are from the Baltimore area, but it's the same story throughout the state. I'm still finding bottles and cans from my childhood years! Let's finally make it to the finish line on this bill and start reversing course on all the damage that's already been done.

Thank you.

Jon Merryman – Catonsville, Maryland  
5 Magruder Avenue  
Catonsville, MD 21228  
443-740-3590  
jtmerryman@comcast.net

Retention pond near Glen Burnie, near Sawmill Creek:





Dundalk (Fort Holabird Park, along the shore of Colgate Creek):





Masonville Creek (near Masonville Cove and Captain Trash Wheel), South Baltimore:



**APR written testimony support MD HB735\_recycling r**

Uploaded by: Kate Bailey

Position: FAV



February 26, 2024

Dear Delegate Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Plastics Recyclers, I am **submitting testimony in support of HB735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**. This is a proven solution to reduce litter, recycle more beverage containers, and build a more resilient domestic supply chain. This bill will take plastic bottles off the streets and out of the waterways of Maryland, and instead put them back into the hands of U.S. manufacturers to be made into new packaging.

[The Association of Plastic Recyclers \(APR\)](#) is a US-based non-profit and the only North American organization focused exclusively on improving the recycling of plastics. APR members are the entirety of the plastics recycling industry from design to collection to recovery to remanufacturing. Plastics recycling is what APR does every day. APR understands the challenges facing the industry and the solutions needed to scale recycling effectively as a key solution to reduce plastic pollution and waste and move toward a more sustainable, circular economy.

This bill is a win-win for the environment and the economy. Recycling refunds will:

**Reduce litter and plastic waste.**

Beverage containers are among the most littered items across beaches, parks, streets, and other public areas. Recycling refunds are proven to [reduce bottle litter by 30-50%](#), and [70% of US residents want the government](#) to take action to reduce plastic waste and litter.

**Significantly increase plastics recycling.**

Plastics recycling works every day all across the US. Nearly [5 billion pounds](#) of plastic were recycled in the US in 2020. This is led by states with bottle deposit programs where over [70% of plastic beverage containers are collected and recycled](#). With more deposit policies, U.S. plastic recyclers would have access to more material. [Recyclers could process 50% more](#) soda bottles, water bottles, milk jugs and other common plastics today using our country's existing infrastructure if they were able to access more material.

### **Support US jobs.**

Five billion pounds of post-consumer plastics are recovered for recycling from US sources each year, and more than [92% of plastics are recycled within](#) North America, supporting jobs and local economies across the country. [Recycling plastics, metal, glass, paper, and other materials supports over 680,000 jobs](#) and contributes more than \$37.8 billion in wages and \$5.5 billion in tax revenues across the U.S.

### **Strengthen domestic supply chains.**

Recycling provides companies with the raw feedstocks to make new products. By collecting and reusing our plastics domestically, we strengthen local supply chains, reduce global market volatility, and keep more value circulating in local economies.

### **Reduce carbon pollution.**

Plastics recycling also saves energy, reduces pollution, and reduces use of fossil fuels. Recycling #1 and #2 plastic bottles can save [75 to 88% of the energy used to make virgin plastics and reduce GHG emissions by 70%](#).

### **Business leaders are calling for policy to drive change.**

Business leaders around the US are calling for state and federal legislation to accelerate investments in recycling to meet their circular economy goals. The [US Plastics Pact supports bottle deposit policies](#), and the [major U.S. trade associations representing plastics, glass, and aluminum](#) all support deposit policies.

### **US companies want to buy more recycled plastics but supply is lacking**

Major consumer goods companies, [such as Nestle, Procter & Gamble, and PepsiCo](#), have made substantial commitments to use more recycled plastic in their packaging. Recycling rates for PET water bottles and soda bottles need to nearly triple by 2025 to meet this demand. Without greater participation in recycling, companies will need to import plastics from other sources outside the U.S. to meet these goals.

### **Complementary policy but independent of EPR for packaging**

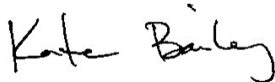
Both recycling refunds and EPR for packaging are needed solutions to collect more plastic packaging for recycling. Recycling refunds is the most proven, effective solution for collecting and recycling plastic beverage containers, while EPR for packaging improves recycling for both containers and many other plastic packaging formats. Recycling refunds can also substantially reduce litter, providing a critical complementary benefit to EPR for packaging. It is important to recognize these two

policies are both complementary and independent, and we urge the legislature to consider these as both-and policies, not an either-or approach. While Maryland is currently conducting [a study on EPR for packaging](#), this bill does not need to wait for that analysis.

### **Moving forward**

We encourage you to move this bill forward and continue to work with stakeholders on further refinements to make it a model for the entire country. APR staff are available at your convenience to discuss these comments and share further technical, regulatory, and policy information. Please do not hesitate to contact Kate Bailey, Chief Policy Officer, at [katebailey@plasticsrecycling.org](mailto:katebailey@plasticsrecycling.org).

Sincerely,



Kate Bailey  
Chief Policy Officer, Association of Plastics Recyclers  
[katebailey@plasticsrecycling.org](mailto:katebailey@plasticsrecycling.org)

# **HB 735 Beverage Container Recycling Refund FAVORAB**

Uploaded by: Kelly Doordan

Position: FAV



**Testimony On:** HB 735 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program  
**Submitted by:** Zero Waste Montgomery County  
**Committee:** Environment and Transportation  
**Position:** Support  
**Date:** February 28, 2024

Honorable Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record. My name is Kelly Doordan and I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of Zero Waste Montgomery County. We strongly SUPPORT H.B. 735 (Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program).

The program would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. Without this program, billions of containers sold in Maryland are being incinerated, landfilled, or left to pollute Maryland's streets and waterways. Importantly, this program offers Marylanders a self-financing and proven program to reduce beverage container litter and increase recycling of high quality materials. Unclaimed deposits would fund a grant program to increase reuse and further recycling, helping our state move toward zero waste and saving local governments money in water cleanup and trash disposal costs.

We already have years of data from our waste characterizations and recycling reports, along with estimates of numbers of beverage containers sold in the state and how much litter removed from our waterways is from beverage containers. We do not need to wait for another report to tell us what we know is needed now. For example, in Montgomery County, while only 1.2 percent of our non-recycled trash is categorized as PET #1 plastic bottles, that translated to an estimate of more than 9,100 tons of waste in 2023.<sup>1</sup>

Trash dumped in waterways is a health hazard for people, wildlife, and fish, and has negative aesthetic and economic impacts. The Anacostia River is so impacted by trash pollution that it was the second waterway in the nation that compelled the U.S. EPA to establish as requiring a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for trash.<sup>2</sup> Beverage container litter is currently about half the

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County, MD, Department of Environmental Protection, MSW Management System Analysis, *Request for Expressions of Interest, Shady Grove Transfer Station Waste Tonnage and Composition Data*.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/dc/steps-taken-reduce-trash-anacostia>

volume of trash in Anacostia River trash traps,<sup>3</sup> meaning efforts to encourage beverage container litter reduction and recycling have not been effective and we need to do more.

This legislation would:

- Enable Marylanders to enjoy the benefits of a program that has measurably reduced beverage container litter in other states.
- Protect our streets and waters from beverage container litter that clogs storm drains, clutters streams, and breaks down into microplastics that pollute our state's waters.
- Implement an evidence-based program to improve recycling rates to as much as 90% backed by decades of experience in more than ten other states.
- Prevent billions more beverage containers from being destroyed in incinerators or landfills or littered to pollute our streets and waters.
- Help Maryland move toward zero waste and circular economy systems where we keep materials circulating in our economy at the highest and best value. Beverage container refund programs provide different incentives and build out different types of infrastructure compared to other recycling programs. The beverage containers collected in deposit/refund systems are cleaner and better suited for remanufacturing or reuse than containers sorted out from trash or single stream recycling systems.

Please pass the Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program this year. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>3</sup> Anacostia Watershed Society

# **HB735\_Town of Brentwood\_FAV**

Uploaded by: Lauren Rauk

Position: FAV



**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

Town Hall | 4300 39th Place | Brentwood, Maryland 20722 (301) 927-3344 | [info@brentwoodmd.gov](mailto:info@brentwoodmd.gov)  
[www.brentwoodmd.gov](http://www.brentwoodmd.gov)







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



**HB0735\_Bottle\_Deposit\_ENT\_CJW\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Environment and Transportation  
**Testimony on:** HB0735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program  
**Organization:** Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing  
**Submitting:** Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0735. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of nearly 30 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB0735.

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.

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 as part of a circular and zero waste economy. We also note recycling refund programs for beverage containers go hand in hand with legislation passed last year initiating the process to adopt producer responsibility for packaging. It is estimated that 40 to 60 percent of packaging is beverage containers according to the National Stewardship Action Council. Producer responsibility programs help us reduce our volume of waste. Recycling refund programs help us reuse and recycle a major portion of the packaging waste stream.

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. The MLC Climate Justice Wing strongly supports HB0735 and urges a FAVORABLE report in Committee.

350MoCo

Adat Shalom Climate Action

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Chesapeake Earth Holders

Climate Parents of Prince George's

Climate Reality Project

ClimateXChange – Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists

DoTheMostGood Montgomery County

Echotopia

Elders Climate Action

Fix Maryland Rail

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

HoCoClimateAction

IndivisibleHoCoMD

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mobilize Frederick

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Mountain Maryland Movement

Nuclear Information & Resource Service

Progressive Maryland

Safe & Healthy Playing Fields

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

WISE

**HB0735\_Bottle\_Deposit\_ENT\_LPP.org\_FAV .pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV



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

**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2024

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegates Terrasa, Edelson, Boafó, 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](#)  
by Liz Feighner  
[LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com](mailto:LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com)

# **National Aquarium - HB 735 - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Maggie Ostdahl

Position: FAV





# NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

Date: February 28, 2024

Bill: HB 735 – Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction

Position: Support

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Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for **House Bill 735 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**, which will reduce pollution, decrease costs of waste management, and increase recycling rates.

Reducing litter from beverage containers across Maryland is related to all the National Aquarium’s strategic conservation goals: saving wildlife and habitats, combatting climate change, and stopping plastic pollution. Every year about four billion beverage bottles, more than half of which are plastic, are not captured by Maryland recycling systems and are instead incinerated or left as litter in the environment. Waste incineration adds greenhouse gas emissions and harmful air pollution to the atmosphere while also disincentivizing better waste management practices including source reduction, reuse systems, recycling and composting. To make matters worse, trash incinerators are often sited in underserved and overburdened communities. This bill would lead to fewer beverage containers burned as trash, therefore supporting improved air quality and environmental justice.

Meanwhile, plastic beverage bottles left in the environment break down into smaller pieces that endanger wildlife, contaminate the global food web, and transport toxins harmful to human health. The burden and costs of mismanaged waste that becomes plastic pollution, including many beverage containers, are varied, complex and borne primarily by municipalities, communities, and taxpayers. Nationally, the U.S. spends at least \$11 billion to clean up trash that is ‘leaked’ into the environment. Closer to home, the Maryland Department of Transportation estimates expenditures of approximately \$8 million annually to remove truckloads of litter, including beverage containers, from roadways. During the past two years, the National Aquarium worked with hundreds of dedicated volunteers to pick up more than 26,000 plastic beverage containers – and ours is one of many organizations that conduct regular cleanups throughout the state. In short, many Marylanders’ time and capacity as well as millions of dollars could be better allocated when this legislation offers a proven policy solution.

Refundable bottle deposit programs currently operating in ten other U.S. states have been shown to be highly effective policies that recover beverage containers and increase recycling rates while reducing litter and associated costs of mitigation. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 735.**

Contact:

**Ryan Fredriksson**

Vice President, Government Affairs

410-385-8276

[rfredriksson@aquarium.org](mailto:rfredriksson@aquarium.org)

**Maggie Ostdahl**

Sr. Conservation Policy Manager

410-385-8275

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# **EMurphy\_TownPlaceSuites\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV



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,

**I'm writing to express my strong support for the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (HB 735), also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.** I am Dr. Ernest Murphy, Managing Member of Hospitality Development Group, LLC which owns and operates Courtyard by Marriott in Bowie, Maryland, TownePlace Suites by Marriott in Bowie, Maryland and TownePlace Suites by Marriott in Annapolis Junction, Maryland.

I support this bill because littered beverage containers are bad for hospitality businesses like mine and bad for the environment. Littered beverage containers on Maryland's beaches, in its waterways, in Baltimore Harbor, and in the Chesapeake Bay are harmful to the state's recreation and tourism. Who would come to Maryland to fish on a river or a lake with beverage containers floating around them? Who would want to canoe down a river with beverage containers snagged on the shoreline? We don't want our customers to encounter littered beverage containers in our parking lots and on our premises.

Beverage container deposit laws are a proven, highly effective policy that will reduce litter and recover used beverage containers across the state. A small deposit would be added to the price of beverage containers sold in the state, and refunded when the empty containers are returned for recycling. This provides the incentive for the public not to leave beverage containers in the environment, and to pick them up for a refund when they're found. Ten U.S. states, covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful programs. Dozens of countries across the globe have adopted or are planning to adopt these laws to prevent litter and plastic pollution.

There are many other economic and environmental benefits of the Maryland Bottle Bill. It will divert about 200,000 tons of beverage containers from the waste stream annually, including about 2 billion plastic bottles that pollute our waterways and harm marine life. It will capture 90% of beverage containers for recycling, provide clean recycled materials for making new containers, reduce costs for local governments, create jobs, and support development of reusable beverage containers. By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would eliminate 195,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 42,000 cars.

These benefits will be achieved with little or no inconvenience to my business. The deposits we pay for covered beverage containers will be refunded when the stewardship organization picks up our empties for recycling. In addition, we will receive a small, per-

container material handling benefit for returning them. We may even realize savings in lower costs for trash and recycling pick-up.

**Please support the Maryland Bottle Bill!** It's good for business and good for the planet!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. M. M." or similar, written in a cursive style.

**HB735\_MDSierraClub\_fav 28Feb2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV





Maryland Chapter  
P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation  
**Testimony on:** HB 735 – “Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program”  
**Position:** Support  
**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports HB 735. The primary objective of this bill is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution in Maryland. It would create a beverage container deposit program with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers. The deposit would be refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. By attaching value to empty beverage containers, fewer are littered and those that are littered do not remain in the environment. These programs have been shown to be highly effective in the U.S. and around the world for reducing beverage container litter and diverting containers from disposal. They also produce a number of other important benefits, highlighted below.

### **The problem**

Beverage container litter in Maryland has reached crisis levels and is a major source of plastic pollution, posing threats to the environment and human health. About 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only about a quarter (1.2 billion) are recycled.<sup>1</sup> Four billion containers annually are wasted – left in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways, or incinerated. More than half of these wasted containers are plastic. Beverage containers, most of them plastic, account for half or more of the trash in trash traps on the Anacostia River watershed.<sup>2</sup>

Maryland’s beverage container litter problem is so severe that the Environmental Protection Agency declared the Anacostia watershed to be impaired with trash in 2010, and made the same determination in 2014 for the watershed surrounding Baltimore Harbor. Our state, home to the largest estuary in the country – the Chesapeake Bay, also has the dubious distinction of having two of the three water bodies in the country that are impaired for trash and regulated by the EPA under the Clean Water Act.

*Plastic pollution from beverage containers poses a threat to wildlife and human health. The containers break into ever smaller pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Plastic particles have been found in the food we eat, the air we breathe, and in most human organs. Scientists estimate that we are ingesting up to a credit card’s worth of plastic weekly.<sup>3</sup> The impact of plastic ingestion on human health is of great concern.*

### **The solution**

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have

<sup>1</sup> Container Recycling Institute (CRI). “2022 Beverage Market Data Analysis (BMDA)” for Maryland, based on 2019 data.

<sup>2</sup> Anacostia Watershed Society, Anacostia Riverkeeper.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlberg and University of Newcastle, Australia. 2019. *No Plastic in Nature: Assessing Plastic Ingestion from Nature to People*. Commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund.

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.



longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs.<sup>4</sup> Beverage container litter in those states was reduced by 70-84%.<sup>5</sup> A study of coastal litter in debris surveys in Australian and U.S. states with and without container deposit legislation found that the share of containers in states with container deposit legislation was 40% lower than in states without the laws.<sup>6</sup> According to a 2011 analysis of the impact of a beverage container deposit system in Maryland, "... there is little evidence that any other program, in and of itself, is nearly as effective as deposit programs at reducing litter rates."<sup>7</sup>

The power of a refundable deposit on consumer behavior not only reduces litter but has an enormous impact on recycling rates for beverage containers covered by these programs. Recycling rates for beverage containers in the ten deposit states in 2019 averaged 75%, ranging from 59% to 91%, compared with an estimated 23% in Maryland, with no deposit (Exhibit 1). Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit. Deposit beverage containers are 2-3 times more likely to be recycled than are containers not subject to a deposit (Exhibit 2). The ten deposit states represent 17% of the U.S. population but contribute 48% of U.S. beverage container recycling.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Maryland Bottle Bill (HB 735)**

The Maryland Bottle Bill, which would initiate a deposit as of January 1, 2027, has benefitted from lessons learned over the past 50 years for successful beverage container deposit programs.

- It would maximize the impact on reducing beverage container litter and waste by including all beverages in metal, plastic, and glass beverage containers<sup>9</sup> and setting a deposit level that will motivate the public to change behavior: 10 cents for containers 24 fluid ounces or less and 15 cents for larger containers, up to 3 liters.
- It would require beverage producers to take responsibility for financing and implementing the program, with significant oversight from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). The program would be implemented by a non-profit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization of all beverage producers selling or distributing redeemable beverage containers in the State. MDE's responsibilities include: appointing the Stewardship Organization; approving a Stewardship Plan and annual reports; and setting convenience standards and handling fees, among others. An Advisory Council of stakeholders would advise MDE on approval of the Stewardship Organization, its stewardship plan, annual reports, and program implementation and performance.
- It would create the conditions for future development and adoption of reusable/refillable beverage container systems. Ten percent of unclaimed deposits would fund a Recycling Refund Grant program, to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers.
- The program would pay for itself, including MDE oversight. It would be funded from registration and Stewardship Organization fees paid by beverage producers, the revenue from sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties paid by producers. Registration fees paid by beverage producers are set to completely cover the costs of MDE oversight and are kept in a special account in the State Recycling Trust Fund that can only be used for specific program purposes and will not revert to the General Fund.

<sup>4</sup>California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Vermont.

<sup>5</sup>Reloop and CRI. 2021. *Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Reduce Litter.* <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/DRS-Litter-Fact-Sheet-Summary-14June2021.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>Schuyler, Qamar, *et al.* 2018. "Economic incentives reduce plastic inputs to the ocean," *Marine Policy* 96: 250-255. October.

<sup>7</sup>University of Maryland, Environmental Finance Center (EFC). 2011. "2011 Impact Analysis of a Beverage Container Deposit Program in Maryland." December 15, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>CRI. "2022 Beverage Market Data Analysis (BMDA)" for Maryland, based on 2019 data. *Op.Cit.*

<sup>9</sup>Medical beverages and infant formula are the only excluded beverages.



Several features of the bill have been updated since last year's General Assembly in response to feedback from stakeholders, including:

- Implementation by a single Beverage Container Stewardship Organization, rather than the potential for multiple organizations, to facilitate MDE oversight
- Extension of the preparation time for program launch by one year (from 18 to 30 months)
- Ensuring that MDE's expenditures leading up to the launch are fully covered, via reimbursements of any General Fund expenses. The program is completely self-financing.
- Clarifying the expectations for retailers and hospitality establishments (sellers of beverages consumed on premises, such as restaurants, hotels, bars, sports venues)
- Exempting small retailers with less than 3,000 square feet of sales area from having to accept most containers for redemption and refund.
- Adding a per container materials handling fee for hospitality establishments for collecting and pre-sorting empty redeemed containers to be picked up by the program for recycling.

### **The program's benefits**

Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution: The program would capture more than 3 billion additional beverage containers annually for recycling, including 2 billion plastic bottles, diverting at least 200,000 tons of plastic, aluminum, and glass containers from litter, landfills, and incinerators.

Quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate: With a 10-cent deposit, the recycling rate for beverage containers, currently estimated at only about 23% of containers sold in the state, would nearly quadruple to more than 90%.

Increase in high quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers: When the targets are achieved, the program would generate an additional 11,305 tons of aluminum, 44,066 tons of PET plastic, 3,207 tons of HDPE plastic, and 140,923 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers. The program would contribute to creating a circular, bottle-to-bottle economy that maximizes the reduction in waste.

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions: By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from the Maryland Bottle Bill would eliminate 195,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 42,000 cars from the road.

Savings for taxpayers and local governments: Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection and processing of the three-quarters of beverage containers currently being disposed or littered, as well as the collection and processing of some containers currently recycled. The program will divert materials from costly landfills and incinerators. These disposal costs are currently borne by taxpayers and local governments.<sup>10</sup>

Investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems: Deposits are critical for development of refillable and reusable containers. The program will launch that transition, with a target of 10% of beverage containers sold in Maryland to be reusable and refillable by 2034.

<sup>10</sup> A review of more than 30 studies of the impact of beverage container deposit programs on costs to local governments worldwide found that in the context of the overall waste management system, *local governments saved costs from adoption of the deposit program*. Reloop. 2021. *Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Generate Cost Savings for Municipalities*. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fact-Sheet-Economic-Savings-for-Munis-8FEB2021.pdf>



Job creation: Increased recycling generated by a deposit program would create five times as many jobs in collection, sorting, and transporting as created by garbage collection, hauling, landfilling, or incineration. The maintenance of reverse vending machines and investments in the reuse/refill systems will also create new opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

We need to act now to pass the Maryland Bottle Bill. Maryland is facing a plastic pollution crisis that is impacting our health and the environment. Beverage container deposit programs are spreading worldwide, fueled by public concern about plastic pollution (Exhibit 3). Based on decades of experience from bottle bills in the U.S. and abroad, the HB 735 will substantially reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It will also increase the quality of recycled material for closed loop recycling and provide for a transition from single-use to reusable/refillable containers. These are the unique impacts of deposit programs. In states with beverage container deposit programs, deposits coexist with curbside collection to maximize recycling by capturing containers for beverages consumed at and away from home.

The Sierra Club also supports legislation to reduce packaging, redesign hard-to-recycle packaging for recyclability, and make producers responsible for those outcomes. Beverage container deposit programs and packaging reduction programs complement each other and both need to be passed. But there's no need to wait to pass the Maryland Bottle Bill, because the elements for success are already well established and this is the only bill of the two that will reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. Every year we wait, another 4 billion containers are left in the environment. We respectfully request a favorable report on HB 735.

Martha Ainsworth, Chair  
Chapter Zero Waste Team  
Martha.Ainsworth@MDSierra.org

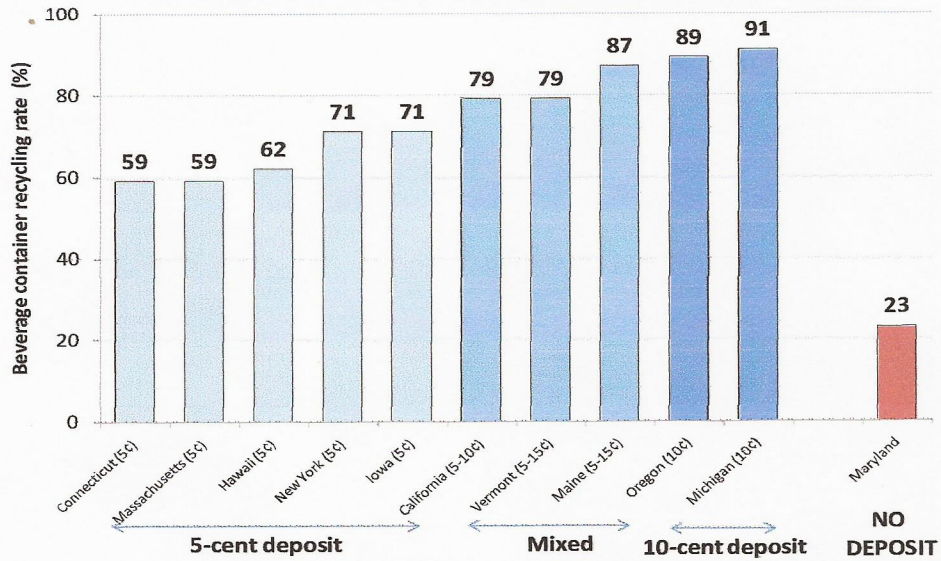
Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

## Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 - Recycling rates in deposit states are several times higher than in Maryland and highest in states with at least a 10-cent deposit
- Exhibit 2 - Recycling rates by material type in deposit and non-deposit states, 2019
- Exhibit 3 - Global Growth in Container Deposit Laws, 2017-2027

**Exhibit 1. Recycling rates in deposit states are several times higher than in Maryland and highest in states with at least a 10-cent deposit**

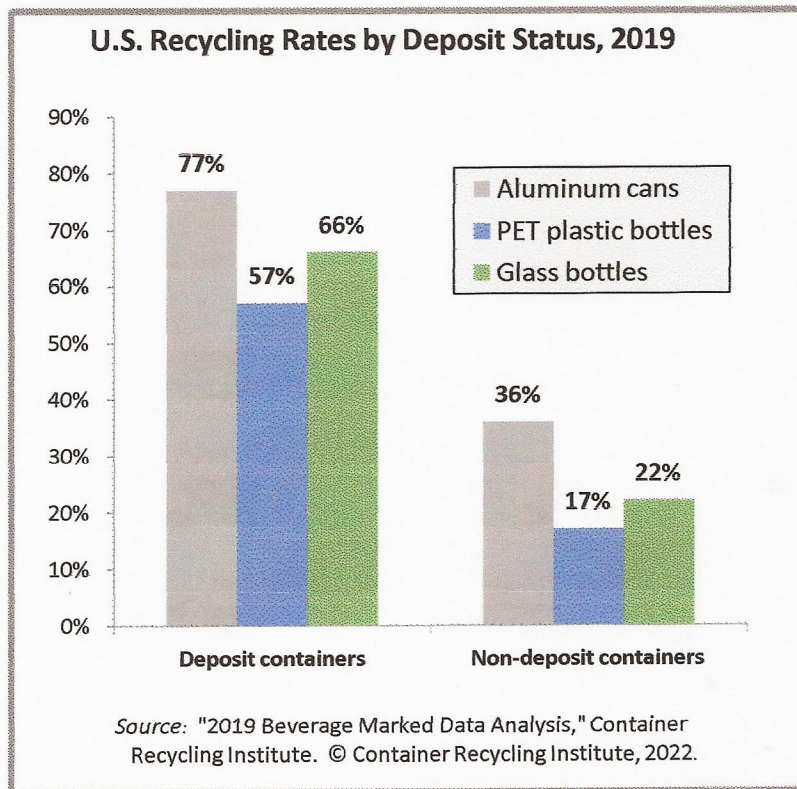
**Recycling rates (%) for covered beverage containers in deposit states vs. Maryland, 2019**



Source: Container Recycling Institute, 2022 Beverage Market Data Analysis

Note: The statistic for Maryland is the estimated recycling rate for all beverage cans and bottles sold in the state in 2019.

**Exhibit 2:**



Source: "2019 Beverage Market Data Analysis," Container Recycling Institute. © Container Recycling Institute, 2022.

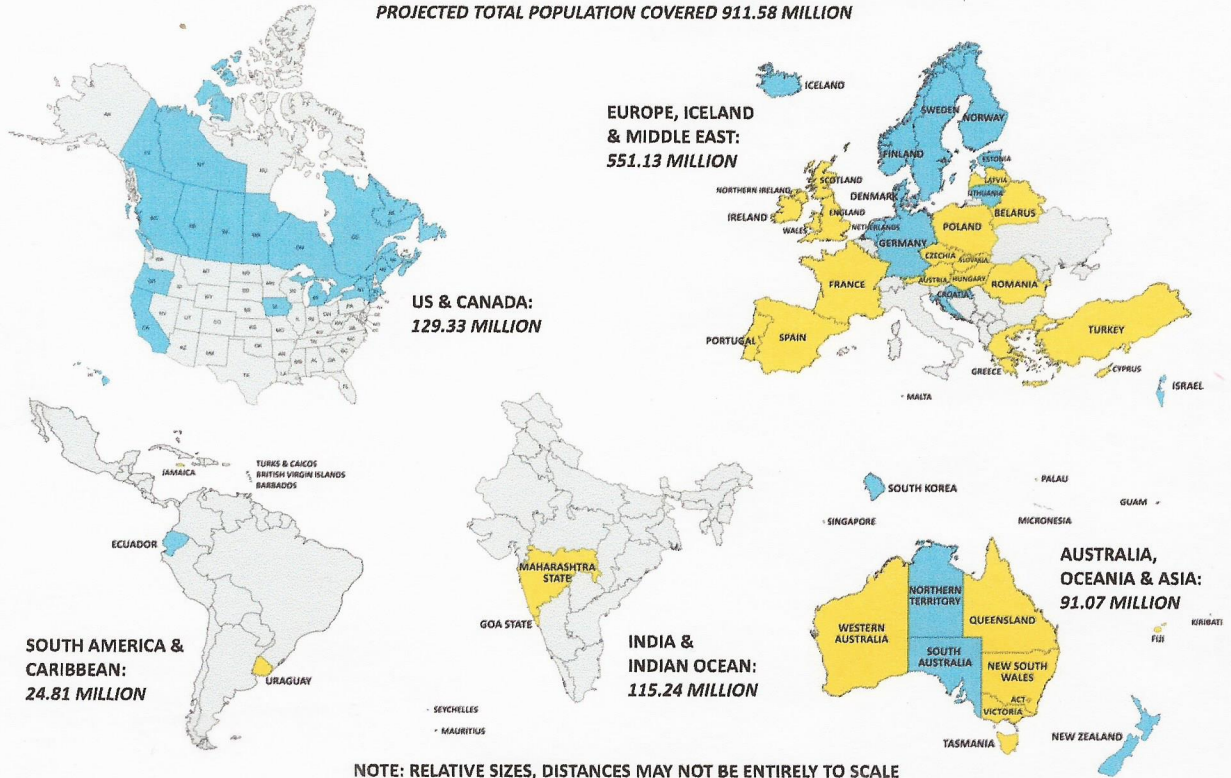


### Exhibit 3:

## GLOBAL GROWTH IN CONTAINER DEPOSIT LAWS 2017-2027

■ IMPLEMENTED BEFORE 2017:  
 357.08 MILLION PEOPLE COVERED
 ■ IMPLEMENTED OR PENDING 2017-2027:  
 554.5 MILLION PEOPLE COVERED

PROJECTED TOTAL POPULATION COVERED 911.58 MILLION



Source: Container Recycling Institute, 2024.

# **Surfrider Support Letter HB735.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Gove

Position: FAV



February 26, 202

**RE: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (HB735)**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

The Surfrider Foundation's Ocean City and Annapolis Chapters, and our Annapolis High School Club support the *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program* ([HB735](#) and [SB642](#)), commonly known as the "bottle bill".

About 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, but only 23% of them are recycled. The rest are either incinerated, landfilled, or littered. No surprise that beverage containers are the second most collected item (behind only cigarette butts) at Surfrider's beach clean ups in the State.

Littered plastic bottles add to the plastic pollution crisis; plastic particles have been found in drinking water, food, human bodies, and in practically every inch of the globe. This pollution poses significant health risks to humans, especially those in underserved communities where the majority of plastic manufacturing and waste management infrastructure is located.

Bottle bills are a proven way to drastically increase the rate of recycling for beverage containers, while reducing the need to manufacture virgin bottles and lessening the

amount incinerated or landfilled. Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent bottle deposit.

How it works: Customers pay a small deposit when they purchase beverage containers, which is then refunded to them when they return the container to a retailer or redemption facility. The program is self-financing, saving costs to taxpayers and local governments. A share of the unclaimed deposits will fund development of refill/reuse bottle systems.

Bottle bills are proven policies to reduce litter and pollution, increase recycling rates, and increase the use of recycled materials--please cosponsor and support the *Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program Program* (HB735 and SB642), commonly known as the “bottle bill”.

Thank you for considering our comments.

**Marina Feeser, Chair**

Ocean City Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation  
chair@oceancity.surfrider.org

**Amy Adamo, Chair**

Annapolis Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation  
chair@annapolis.surfrider.org

**Gracyn Green, Chair**

Annapolis High School Club of the Surfrider Foundation  
ahs@clubs.surfrider.org

**HB 735 - CBF - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education

## House Bill 735

### Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Date: February 23, 2024	Position: <b>Favorable</b>
To: Environment and Transportation Committee Economic Matters Committee	From: Julieta Rodrigo, Urban and Community Resilience Manager

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 735 which establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce the litter, pollution, and costs associated with beverage containers

#### **Most plastic beverage containers in Maryland are not recycled.**

Although recycling programs have existed in Maryland for many years, less than one-quarter of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in the state in 2019 were recycled and reused.<sup>1</sup> This means that the remaining 4 billion containers were left in the environment, to meet their fate of landfilling, incineration, or littering. In addition to the negative impacts of plastic pollution on the aesthetic and environmental health of our ecosystems, this is a large waste of resources, as virgin plastic requires large amounts of fossil fuels, the extraction and burning of which result in higher greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. Incineration of plastic bottles also contributes to poor air quality in Maryland, releasing nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and other pollutants that worsen residents' health and affect the acidity and balance of our Chesapeake Bay.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Plastic beverage bottles contribute to microplastic pollution and environmental damages.**

Contrary to the popular belief that plastic pollution largely ends up in the ocean, most of the plastic pollution that makes its way into the rivers of the Chesapeake Bay stays in and along local waters. Indeed, about 94% of microplastics – particles measuring 5 millimeters or less in diameter – that feed into the system via its rivers stay in the system, with an additional 5% carried to the ocean and 1% remaining in the water column.<sup>3</sup> Microplastics threaten the health of the biodiversity that lives within the Bay watershed, as well as the health of the residents that consume seafood. For example, microplastics can physically block or fill up an animal's gut, potentially reducing its ability or desire to feed. Microplastics can also cause behavioral changes as their presence changes a fish's buoyancy or swimming behavior, which can make the fish more susceptible to predators. Microplastics also can carry toxic chemicals into the fish's body, which

<sup>1</sup> Container Recycling Institute, 2022. "2019 Beverage Market Data Analysis."

<sup>2</sup> "CBF Study: Baltimore Incinerator Causes \$55 Million in Health Problems per Year." *Chesapeake Bay Foundation*, 11 Dec. 2017, <https://www.cbf.org/news-media/newsroom/2017/maryland/cbf-study-baltimore-incinerator-causes-55-million-in-health-problems-per-year.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Pipkin, Whitney. "The Chesapeake Bay Is a 'Sink' for Plastic Pollution." *Bay Journal*, Bay Journal Media, 13 Oct. 2021, [https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/the-chesapeake-bay-is-a-sink-for-plastic-pollution/article\\_ca6f12ec-21fd-11ec-b0c4-cf096494dd62.html](https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/the-chesapeake-bay-is-a-sink-for-plastic-pollution/article_ca6f12ec-21fd-11ec-b0c4-cf096494dd62.html).

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403



could bioaccumulate as the fish consumes other prey that have ingested plastics, and eventually make its way to human consumption.<sup>4</sup> All of these factors threaten the health of our ecosystem, as well as threaten the longevity and safety of Maryland's seafood industry.

**Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter.**

Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs (California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Vermont).<sup>5</sup> Together, they average a 60% recycling rate for beverage containers, compared to 24% in states without these programs.<sup>6</sup> The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is much higher than for containers not subject to a deposit, and it increases with a higher deposit amount. The two states that offer a 10-cent redemption refund, Michigan and Oregon, have the highest beverage bottle recycling rates in the nation, reaching 75%<sup>7</sup> and 85% recycling rates in 2022<sup>8</sup>, respectively. Producer responsibility has been a successful approach toward providing a cleaner and safer future for residents, and we recommend that Maryland take this opportunity to protect its citizens and ecosystems from the harmful effects of abundant plastic production and consumption.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 735.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

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<sup>4</sup> Pipkin, Whitney. "Picture of Chesapeake Microplastics Grows Clearer." *Bay Journal*, Bay Journal Media, 7 June 2021, [https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/picture-of-chesapeake-microplastics-grows-clearer/article\\_87bd3606-c3e1-11eb-bdc4-4f1a3864c6f9.html](https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/picture-of-chesapeake-microplastics-grows-clearer/article_87bd3606-c3e1-11eb-bdc4-4f1a3864c6f9.html).

<sup>5</sup> "Redemption Rates and Other Features of 10 U.S. State Deposit Programs." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/images/Allstates/10-state%20Summary%208-5-22r.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> "Bottle Bills", Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.container-recycling.org/index.php/issues/bottle-bills>.

<sup>7</sup> "Michigan." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/michigan>.

<sup>8</sup> "Oregon." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/oregon>.

# **Testimony HB0735 FAV MSchweisguth.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV

Melissa A Schweisguth  
Hyattsville, MD 20782

February 26, 2024

Re: FAVORABLE position on HB0735 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Korman and Committee members,

Thank you for your service to the State of Maryland. I am writing to ask that the committee provide a favorable report on HB0735, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, and support its passage in the House and General Assembly.

HB0735 would solve two persistent and widespread problems that have negative environmental and economic impacts: littering and lack of recycling of single use-beverage containers (e.g. plastic water and soda bottles, beer bottles, cans).

I live in District 22, where I have adopted a trail with my local watershed group, lead and carry out trail clean ups, and run and bike across the extensive trail system spanning Prince George's and Montgomery counties. Discarded single-use beverage containers are the most common item collected in every cleanup. They dot the trails, river and streambank, and roads throughout my area and the state, too. Beverage containers are one of the most common litter items in the . The Anacostia Watershed Society's Anacostia River trash traps, which capture litter from my watershed. Plastic bottles are especially concerning as they break into tiny "microplastics" that contaminate the environment and enter our food chain when animals ingest them.

Data indicate that less than one-quarter of beverage containers sold in Maryland are recycled; only about 1.2 billion (23 percent) of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland annually are recycled while 4 billion are wasted—landfilled, littered or incinerated. This results in negative climate and environmental impacts due to continued use of virgin materials, as well as the impacts of incineration (e.g., toxic ash) and landfilling (e.g., methane)

HB0735 solves these problems by creating a refundable deposit system, wherein consumers pay a small deposit (10 or 15 cents) when they purchase beverages, and can get the deposit back when they return containers for recycling. The proposed system includes conveniently located return facilities, a Stewardship Organization representing the container industry, and a Plan that would be approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MDE would oversee the program and provide enforcement, with input from an Advisory Council.

The proposed deposit system is a proven model: ten states, covering about 90 million people, have well-established deposit programs with high success rates. According to data provided by the Maryland Sierra Club, programs with at least a 10-cent deposit recover up to 90 percent of containers for reuse or recycling, more than triple Maryland's beverage container recycling rate.

The proposed deposit program is cost-effective as it provides an incentive for consumers to maximize recycling and would leverage beverage industry funding to run the program, avoiding increased costs for the government. It would reduce the cost of collecting, recycling, landfilling and incinerating beverage containers, provide high quality recycled materials for container manufacturing, stimulate recycling markets and investments in deposit systems, improve water quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

For these reasons, I enthusiastically support HB0735 and ask that the committee return a favorable report and support its passage in the House.

Thank you for considering my comments on this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melissa A. Schweisguth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "M" and "S".

Melissa A Schweisguth

# **Testimony HB0735 Neighbors of the NW Branch FAV.pd**

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 4314  
Silver Spring, MD 20914

February 26, 2024

Re: FAVORABLE position on HB0735 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Korman and Committee members,

Thank you for your service to the State of Maryland. I am writing on behalf of Neighbors of the Northwest Branch (NNWB), a local 501(C)(3) nonprofit, citizen-based action group dedicated to restoring the health of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. We work to ensure that this urban treasure can be safely enjoyed by wildlife, our families, and Montgomery and Prince Georges county residents for generations to come.

NNWB takes a FAVORABLE position on HB0735, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. We respectfully ask that you issue a favorable committee report and continue to support it through passage.

HB0735 would solve two major problems: littering and lack of recycling of single-use beverage containers (e.g., plastic water and soda bottles, beer bottles, cans), which have negative environmental and economic impacts. As we know from the many clean ups we have led and the time we spend enjoying the watershed, discarded single-use beverage containers are common due to littering or unintentional loss from recycling bins and trucks. The Anacostia Watershed Society determined that beverage containers are one of the most common litter items in Anacostia River trash traps. Plastic bottles break into tiny toxic particles (microplastics) that contaminate soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals ingest them.

Data indicate that less than one-quarter of beverage containers sold in Maryland are recycled, resulting in continued use of virgin materials, which has negative impacts on the environment and climate. Of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland annually, only about 1.2 billion (23 percent) are recycled while 4 billion are wasted—landfilled, littered or incinerated.

HB0735 addresses these problems by creating a statewide deposit and return system with a small deposit (10 or 15 cents) that consumers would pay when they purchase beverages and

then receive back when they return beverage containers for recycling. HB0735 provides for the establishment of efficient, conveniently located redemption facilities with measures to prevent fraud, a Stewardship Organization representing producers that sell beverage containers in Maryland, and a Plan approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MDE would provide oversight and enforcement, with input from an Advisory Council.

The proposed deposit system is a proven model: ten states, covering about 90 million people, have long standing, successful beverage container deposit programs. Data indicate that programs with at least a 10-cent refundable deposit recover as much as 90 percent of used beverage containers for reuse or recycling - a result that equates to tripling Maryland's current beverage container recycling rate.

The approach that HB0735 proposes is cost effective as it leverages beverage industry funding to launch and maintain the program, avoiding increased costs for the government, and provides an incentive for consumers to maximize recycling. Moreover, it would reduce the costs of collecting, recycling, landfilling and incinerating beverage containers for governments and consumers, provide high quality, food-grade recycled content that can be made into new containers, stimulate regional recycling markets, improve water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, and stimulate investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems.

For these reasons, NNWB endorses HB0735 and asks that the committee return a favorable report and support its passage in the House. HB0735 is a win-win and a positive return on investment for governments, consumers and producers.

Thank you for considering NNWB's comments on this important measure.

Sincerely,

Nora Swisher  
President, Neighbors of the Northwest Branch  
[www.neighborsnwb.org](http://www.neighborsnwb.org)

# **HB0735\_Beverage\_Container\_Recycling\_Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michael Loll

Position: FAV





## **HB0735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

### **Testimony before the Maryland House Committee for Environment and Transportation**

**February 28, 2024**

**Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Ms. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Michael Loll, and I represent the Green Team of St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church in Columbia, MD. Our group's mission is to care for God's creation as instructed by Catholic social teaching. To that end, we advocate for legislation that protects Maryland's environment and its citizens, particularly those who live in underserved and vulnerable communities. We provide written testimony today in **strong support of HB0735**.

According to the Maryland Sierra Club, 5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year. Only 25% of these are recycled, with the rest ending up in roadside litter, landfills, and incinerators. Container deposit bills in other states have reduced the burden of unrecycled cans and bottles on the environment (<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/Sierra-Club-Beverage-Container-Guidance.pdf>). HB0735 would:

- Reduce roadside littering and pollution in our waterways.
- Increase can and bottle recycling, which would provide container manufacturers with stock materials which now have to be imported or made from scratch. Besides reducing manufacturing costs, reuse of materials translates to less pollution and green house gas emissions.
- Create new jobs in recycling and local container collection.
- Decrease toxic emissions from incinerators burning plastic bottles. Incinerators are typically located in low income and minority communities, which must bear the health burdens of this pollution.
- Reduce the cost of recycling for local governments. Since the bill is self funding, taxpayer responsibility for container recycling would be cut back or eliminated.
- Lower recycling costs for restaurants.

This bill has the support of local governments, glass bottle and aluminum can manufacturers, environmental organizations, and various faith groups. Our church emphasizes creation care and looking out for the common good, and this bill meets both of those stipulations. We thank Delegate Terrasa for being one of this bill's sponsors.

Thank you for your time and attention.

**We encourage a favorable report.**

Michael Loll

Columbia, MD

# 2024 HB0735 Support Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael O'Connor

Position: FAV



# FREDERICK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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February 26, 2024

To: Environment and Transportation Committee Chair Delegate Marc Korman

**Re: Support for Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Bill Maryland HB0735**

Dear Del. Korman,

The City of Frederick offers support for the vision of the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction bill. Though City government operations are not likely to incur any costs to operate this program, it will benefit our residents by reducing litter, increasing recycling, and reducing the waste stream the city process through its trash collection operations.

By encouraging reuse and recycling, The City hopes this will reduce the amount of litter in our roadways and streams. The City operates Adopt-a-Road and stream cleanup programs multiple times per year to reduce the litter before it reaches our downstream neighbors.

Our only concern is our small businesses, who may not have space to store the materials or to provide the facilities for pickup, though we hope this bill will provide some creative solutions to manage that.

Overall, this is a positive step toward sustainability by improving the places we live, work, and play, including our waterways and wildlife habitats. We look forward to a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Connor

# **HB735- Story of Stuff Written Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Miriam Gordon

Position: FAV



February 26, 2024

Chairman Marc Korman and Committee Members  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251 House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB 735/SB 642- Favorable

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the House Committee on Environment and Transportation:

The Story of Stuff Project is a national U.S. based nonprofit organization with more than a million Changemakers worldwide, including nearly 1,000 supporters in the state of Maryland. Our mission is to change the way we make, use, and throw away all the Stuff in our lives.

**It's time for Maryland to have a bottle bill.** With only 23% of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland collected for recycling, 4 billion one-way beverage containers litter roadways and pollute waterways and are burned or buried, wasting precious resources and creating more pollution. Bottle deposits are the best way to ensure that beverage containers get returned for recycling and to prevent litter. The state has been considering attaching a deposit to beverage containers since the 1980s.

Given the linked and increasing crises of climate change and plastic pollution, action to collect single-use beverage containers for recycling and to transition to reusable beverage containers is long overdue. We support HB735/SB642 for the following reasons.

**(1) By targeting 10% reuse by 2034, this bill recognizes that it's time to bring back refillable beverage containers.** In the 1960s, the beverage industry in the U.S. made the switch from reusable bottles that it collected, washed and refilled, to single-use cans and bottles that became a waste stream local government and communities had to deal with. But this isn't true in much of the world. Refillable beverage containers are still used by the beverage industry in 170 countries worldwide. Reusables represent an overall market share of 23% by volume globally. Most of the top 10 global non-alcoholic beverage markets, including China, Mexico, Indonesia, India, Brazil, Germany, and Turkey have reusable market shares ranging from 26% - 61%.

Recycling alone isn't enough. Globally, more than 580 billion polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic beverage bottles are produced each year – *nearly 1 million per minute*, which accounts for one-quarter of the world's use of PET plastic. Transitioning to reusable bottles is imperative to reduce materials, water, waste, and climate impacts. Reuse can reduce up to 40% of raw materials inputs and 50% of greenhouse gas emissions associated with beverage packaging. It also achieves lower water and waste impacts. Coca-Cola's Universal PET bottle compared to a single-use bottle was found to reduce carbon emissions up to 47% and the water footprint by 45%. After a third use, reusable glass bottles are already less impactful than single-use glass, PET or aluminum cans. Used 25 times and then recycled, reusable glass bottles create 85% fewer

climate emissions than single-use glass; 57% fewer than aluminum cans; and 70% fewer than single-use PET according to ReLoop.

Reusables also benefit the ocean and local water waterways. [Oceana estimates](#) that a 10% increase in the share of beverages sold in reusables could result in a 22% decrease in marine plastic pollution, keeping 4.5 to 7.6 billion plastic bottles out of the ocean each year.

**(2) The Trash Problem Necessitates Immediate Action.** There is no need to wait for completion of a needs assessment in order to take action. We know already that single-use plastic beverage containers pollute our waterways and pose a threat to wildlife and human health. As a result of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement, local government is already spending too much money controlling trash entering Maryland waterways- half of which is beverage containers according to data from the Anacostia Watershed Society.

It is well established that when empty beverage containers can be redeemed for cash, few are littered or likely to remain littered. According to the Sierra Club, a deposit program would capture more than 3 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 1 billion plastic bottles. Water quality would be improved, recycling would increase, and greenhouse gas emissions related to beverage containers would be reduced. There's no need to wait on taking action to achieve these benefits.

**(3) Increasing recycling and adding refillables is good for Maryland's economy.** The beverage deposit program would shift the financial burden of managing beverage container waste from local governments to the producers of beverages that profit from selling beverages. Recycling generated from that deposit program is estimated to create 5 times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration. Reuse creates even more jobs as additional jobs are created for sorting and washing refillable beverage bottles.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote AYE on this important measure. Please feel free to contact me at [miriam@storyofstuff.org](mailto:miriam@storyofstuff.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

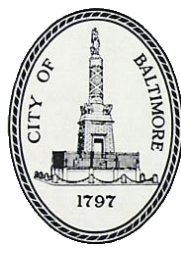
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Miriam Gordon  
Reuse Accelerator

**HB-735-ET-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



**BRANDON M. SCOTT**  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**HB735**

February 28, 2023

**TO:** Members of the Environment and Transportation Matters Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** House Bill-1089- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

**POSITION: Support**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 735.

HB 735 establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase reuse and recycling of beverage containers. By providing the infrastructure for the stewardship of beverage containers, this bill supports local governments with meeting waste reduction goals and preventing post-consumer waste from entering the environment, especially our waterways. Beverage containers covered under the bill include glass, aluminum and plastic bottles. The bill specifies a goal to achieve a 90% redemption rate in the first decade of implementation. This equate to an astounding 5.2 billion single-use beverage containers that can be diverted from waste streams across Maryland. Though the exact number that would be benefit Baltimore City is not known, this target will have significant impacts on the city's waste management strategies that divert and prevent waste. HB735 holds the prospect of reducing the cost of litter and beverage containers collection, recycling and disposal currently imposed on Baltimore City taxpayers.

Programming outlined in the bill also aligns with a goal in the 2019 Sustainability Plan to in our Waste and Recycling, Water in the Environment, and waste reduction goals in Mayor Scott's Term 1 Action Plan.

**Waste and Recycling Chapter**

- Strategy 1: Pursue legislative and policy changes to reduce the waste stream.
- Action 1: Enact legislation to impose a fee for plastic bags, and support state legislation instituting beverage container deposits.



- Action 3: Create and implement a plan to achieve zero waste, meaning we “are working toward or diverting over 90 percent of our discards from landfilling or incineration.” Ensure extensive outreach and a plan that addresses the needs of the entire population.

### **Water in the Environment Chapter**

- Strategy 2: Improve aquatic habitats by increasing riparian restoration and water quality monitoring, and creating policies to eliminate sources of pollution.
- Action 4: Develop and promote legislation and policy at the City and State level to reduce pollution of our waterways, including restricting the use of pesticides and herbicides and reducing the use of single-use plastics (such as plastic bags and beverage bottles).

Non-recyclable materials like plastic bags, polystyrene containers, and beverage containers make up as much as half of the litter polluting local streets and waterways. In 2018, the City Council passed a ban on polystyrene containers for carryout food and drinks by a unanimous vote, the Baltimore City Public School Board voted to phase out Styrofoam trays from school cafeterias in favor of compostable trays and in October 2021 Baltimore City passed a plastic bag ban.

A 2020 [litter characterization study](#) conducted by Keep America Beautiful found that an estimated 75% of litter nationally stems from fast food items such as paper cups, paper bags, or other food-related paper products and the remaining 25% of litter consists of plastic items – including plastic bottles, wrappers, utensils or other plastic food ware. Though many single-use items are utilized by consumer for minutes – disposable cups, plastic bags and bottles, can persist in our environment for decades, even centuries. Non-recyclable materials ranging from plastic bags to polystyrene containers, and beverage containers make up as much as half of the litter polluting local streets and waterways. These realities help frame solutions designed to curb litter across our city.

These bills have proven themselves to be effective waste prevention, behavior change and zero waste planning tools for local governments. An estimated 80% reduction in foam containers and 70% reduction in plastic bags were observed during waste sorts conducted among the family of Trash Wheels across the city. When implemented, the proposed bottle bill will help regulate post-consumer waste across the state, aid local governments with litter prevention/reduction allowing Maryland to shift from waste as a liability to waste as an asset; a way to create good paying, local jobs tied to a workforce development pipeline.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a favorable report on HB 735.

# **Just Zero - Testimony in Support of HB 735 (Feb. 2**

Uploaded by: Peter Blair

Position: FAV



February 28, 2024

Chair Korman  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Testimony in Support of HB 735 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Maryland Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 735. **Just Zero strongly supports this bill.**

Just Zero is a national environmental non-profit advocacy organization that works alongside communities, policy makers, scientists, educators, organizers, and others to implement just and equitable solutions to climate-damaging and toxic production, consumption, and waste disposal practices. We believe that all people deserve Zero Waste solutions with zero climate-damaging emissions and zero toxic exposures.

HB 735 would establish a beverage container recycling refund program – more commonly known as a “Bottle Bill – in Maryland. Just Zero is extremely supportive of Bottle Bills because they reduce litter, increase recycling rates, create jobs, and develop both the consumer culture and infrastructure necessary for reusable beverage systems. If enacted this bill will significantly benefit Maryland’s environment and economy.

While we understand Maryland is currently in the process of developing a Needs Assessment to evaluate packaging waste and to provide recommendations for the development of an Extended Producer Responsibility (“EPR”) for Packaging Program, we strongly urge the committee to prioritize HB 735 this session. Nothing in the needs assessment will impact whether Maryland should establish a Bottle Bill program. Moreover, including beverage containers in a EPR for Packaging program will result in a loss of significant benefits associated with bottle bills such as litter reduction, increased recycling of beverage containers, and the development of reusable beverage container systems.

**I. Bottle Bill Programs Are Incredibly Popular and Prevalent Across the World.**

Bottle Bill programs have been implemented in dozens of jurisdictions around the world, with new programs developing each year. The first Bottle Bill was established in 1970, in British Columbia,



Canada.<sup>1</sup> Since then, over 50 additional jurisdictions have adopted programs, including ten U.S. states, almost all Canadian providences, and a large portion of the European Union.<sup>2</sup> Right now, over 290 million people live in communities with a Bottle Bill.<sup>3</sup> This number is expected to grow as more programs come online. Internationally, Austria, England, France, Ireland, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Poland, Spain, and Wales are all either considering or actively developing Bottle Bill programs.<sup>4</sup> This legislative session, Illinois<sup>5</sup>, Minnesota<sup>6</sup>, New Hampshire<sup>7</sup>, Rhode Island<sup>8</sup>, and Washington<sup>9</sup> are all considering proposals to implement new Bottle Bill programs. These states see these programs as necessary to meet waste reduction, recycling, and climate goals.

## II. Bottle Bills Provide Significant Environmental and Economic Benefits

The reason Bottle Bill programs are so popular and prevalent throughout the world is because they're incredibly effective at reducing litter, increasing recycling, and creating jobs. Moreover, these programs also create the consumer culture and infrastructure that is necessary to shift away from single-use disposal beverage containers to reusable and refillable beverage systems. Importantly, as a form of producer responsibility, Bottle Bill programs provide these benefits while also helping save consumers and governments money.

### A. Litter Reduction

Placing a refundable deposit on every single-use beverage container sold in Maryland will incentivize consumers to hold on to their empty containers and bring them back for recycling. Essentially, the refundable deposit creates an understanding that while you are buying the beverage, you're renting the container. This incentive is extremely important because most single-use beverages are consumed on-the-go and outside of the home. This is why you see plastic soda bottles littering, parks, streets, and streams, but not plastic peanut butter jars.

After Hawaii enacted a Bottle Bill program in 2005, the number of beverage containers collected during Hawaii's Coastal Cleanup fell from 23,471 in 2004, to 10,905 in 2007 – a 53% drop in just three years.<sup>10</sup> Litter reduction has occurred in all ten states with Bottle Bills. A 2020 study by Keep America Beautiful found that states without Bottle Bills have double the amount of beverage container litter than their Bottle Bill counterparts.<sup>11</sup> The report also found that states with Bottle Bills had less overall litter than the states that don't have Bottle Bills.<sup>12</sup> Less litter doesn't just mean

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<sup>1</sup> Reloop, [Global Deposit Book – 2022: An Overview of Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Beverage Containers](#), p. 10 (Nov. 2022)

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at p. 166 -172.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at p. 10

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at p. 158 -165.

<sup>5</sup> See, [Senate Bill 85](#) and [House Bill 4205](#).

<sup>6</sup> See, [HF 3200](#) and [SF 3260](#)

<sup>7</sup> See, [House Bill 1636](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Rhode Island Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study and Provide Recommendations to Protect Our Environment and Natural Resources from Plastic Bottle Waste.](#)

<sup>9</sup> See, [House Bill 2144](#)

<sup>10</sup> Haw. Dep't of Health, Report to the Twenty-Fifth Legislature 9 (2009).

<sup>11</sup> Keep America Beautiful, [2020 National Litter Study](#). Page. 3. May 2021.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*



cleaner, more vibrant communities, it also means less spending on clean-up efforts. Estimates show that the United States spends more than \$11 billion on litter clean up every year.<sup>13</sup>

### B. Increased Recycling of Beverage Containers

Litter reduction is not the only benefit these programs provide. States with Bottle Bill programs also have significantly higher recycling rates than their non-Bottle Bill counterparts. On average, states with Bottle Bills have double the recycling rates than those that rely solely on curbside recycling programs.<sup>14</sup> In terms of plastic and glass bottles, Bottle Bill programs produce recycling rates that are often three times higher than single-stream recycling systems.<sup>15</sup>

The higher recycling rates are attributed to more containers being returned for recycling as a result of the refundable deposit. However, Bottle Bills don't simply increase the number of containers that are returned for recycling. They also create a higher quality of recycled material which significantly increases the likelihood that the containers will actually be recycled to manufacture new products.

The convenience of single stream recycling comes with a cost -- contamination. Single-stream recycling depends first and foremost on educated consumers making the right choice about what can and cannot go into the blue bin. From there, the burden is on Material Recovery Facilities ("MRFs") to remove any unrecyclable materials that made their way into the recycling stream while also processing and sorting the commingled recyclables into distinct separate streams. These sorting processes are imperfect. According to the National Waste and Recycling Association, roughly 25% of what is placed into the single-stream recycling system is too contaminated to go anywhere other than a landfill.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, the materials that are properly sorted are unlikely to be recycled as effectively as possible. The overall quality of the recycled material is the leading factor that determines what that material is ultimately used for. This difference in quality is often the difference between recycling and downcycling. Downcycling refers to using recycled material for projects and purposes that fail to capture the full environmental and economic benefits associated with recycling a product. In the case of beverage containers, the highest and best uses is bottle-to-bottle recycling, where containers are recycled directly into new beverage containers. Common examples of downcycling with beverage containers includes turning plastic beverage containers into carpet and textiles, as well as using crushed glass for road improvement projects or landfill cover. While these uses are preferential to disposing of the material, it still means the materials can only be used once as opposed to being recycled repeatedly.

Creating a standalone program to collect and recycle beverage containers ensures that the materials are uncontaminated and able to be readily recycled. In fact, while the ten Bottle Bill states only represent 27% of the U.S. population, they account for over 50% of all beverage containers recycled

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<sup>13</sup> Andrew Lisa, [It Costs Over \\$11 Billion Per Year to Clean Up Litter – How the Pandemic's Effect on Trash Output May Make It Worse](#), Yahoo. (April 22, 2021).

<sup>14</sup> Container Recycling Institute, [U.S. Nominal Recycling Rates by Deposit Status](#) (2019).

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> Maggie Koerth, [The Era of Easy Recycling May be Coming to an End](#), FiveThirtyEight (Jan. 10, 2019)



annually.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the Bottle Bill states also have higher overall recycling rates as their municipal and curbside recycling systems can better focus their efforts on capturing and recycling other common recyclables.<sup>18</sup>

### C. Job Creation

In addition to reducing litter and increasing recycling rates, Bottle Bills also create good, local jobs. In fact, reports show that Bottle Bills can create between 11 and 38 times more jobs than curbside recycling.<sup>19</sup> These jobs include technicians to service reverse vending machines, bag drop systems, and other forms of beverage container collection, storage, and sorting systems. The programs also create jobs associated with hauling beverage containers from redemption locations to centralized storage areas. There are also other indirect jobs associated with increased recycling and manufacturing of products from recycled materials. A recent analysis of New York's Bottle Bill found that the program supports 5,700 jobs statewide.<sup>20</sup>

### D. Creating a Pathway to Reusable and Refillable Beverage Systems

An additional underrepresented benefit of Bottle Bills is the development of both the infrastructure and consumer culture necessary for the development of reusable and refillable beverage systems. In fact, before the introduction of one-way disposable containers, beverage companies relied on consumers to return bottles to be refilled. Glass bottles were expensive to manufacture and refilling them saved costs. To incentivize refilling, beverage companies utilized a deposit-return program to ensure glass containers were brought back and refilled.

Just Zero strongly supports the requirement in HB 735 that requires at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in Maryland to be returned and refilled by December 31, 2034. This is a necessary and achievable program goal. In Germany, 82% of all beer is sold in reusable bottles, and 99% are returned for reuse.<sup>21</sup> Overall, 54% of beverages sold in Germany are in reusables.<sup>22</sup> In Ontario, Canada, 85% of beer is sold in reusable bottles, with 97% returned and reused an average of 15 times.<sup>23</sup> Both jurisdictions have high functioning Bottle Bill programs that have enabled this reuse.

Domestically, in 2018, Oregon begun utilizing its existing deposit return infrastructure to launch a statewide refillable bottle system.<sup>24</sup> This system utilized approximately 245,000 refillable beer bottles.<sup>25</sup> The bottles can be refilled up to 40 times and were made primarily from recycled glass.<sup>26</sup> The bottles are designed to be easily separated from the rest of glass collected through the deposit

<sup>17</sup> Marissa Heffernan, [Report: Bottle Bills States Recycle More, Provide Models](#), Resource Recycling. (Jan 2, 2024).

<sup>18</sup> Eunomia, [The 50 States of Recycling: a State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates](#). (Dec. 2023).

<sup>19</sup> Reloop, [Factsheet: Deposit Return Systems Create More Jobs](#) (2022).

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Edwards, Eunomia Research and Consulting, Inc., [Employment and Economic Impact of Container Deposits](#), table E1 (Jan. 2019).

<sup>21</sup> Upstream, [Beverage Refill and the New Reuse Economy](#). (July 1, 2023).

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> Jared Pablen, [Oregon Group to Launch Refillable Bottle Program](#), Resource Recycling. (Feb. 7, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> Cassandra Profita, [Oregon Launches First Statewide Refillable Bottle System in U.S.](#), NPR, (Sept. 17, 2018).



return system.<sup>27</sup> Once separated, the bottles are not processed for recycling but sent to a cleaning facility and then eventually sent back to participating breweries where they are refilled. For consumers, nothing has changed. Since launching in 2018, 410,155 bottles have been diverted from recycling for reuse.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, Oregon’s program stalled because the program was entirely voluntary. HB 735 shows that Maryland has learned from Oregon’s mistake by including a mandate for reusables which will ensure that the program consistently grows to foster reuse, not just recycling.

E. Bottles Bills Provide All These Benefits While Also Saving Residents and the State Money.

As a form of producer responsibility, Bottle Bill programs provide these benefits at no cost to consumers or government. At a time where recycling systems are struggling and plastic production and waste is increasing, the idea at the center of Bottle Bill programs remains that the companies that manufacture and distribute single-use beverage containers should ultimately be responsible for the end-of-life management of them. If a Bottle Bill program is developed in Maryland, cities, towns, and residents will no longer be stuck paying to collect, sort, and recycle all these containers. Instead, the large companies that manufacture them will.

Moreover, the reduction in litter will also save the state and local governments money. The Maryland Highway Administration has spent \$39 million over the past five years to clean up trash along state roads.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, this is only a fraction of the money spent addressing litter and doesn’t address the beverage containers littered across local roads, parks, rivers, or beaches.

**III. Maryland Should Adopt a Bottle Bill Independent of Efforts to Establish an Extended Producer for Packaging Program.**

In 2023, Maryland enacted the Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility for Packaging Materials Act.<sup>30</sup> The law requires the completion of a comprehensive needs assessment and tasks the Advisory Council with developing recommendations for establishing an EPR for Packaging program to the Governor by December 1, 2024.<sup>31</sup>

Just Zero is very supportive of this process. However, it should not be used as a reason to delay the development of a Bottle Bill. That needs to happen now. The information in the Needs Assessment – while important for the design and implementation of an EPR for Packaging Program – will not have any significant bearing on whether Maryland should develop a Bottle Bill program. Including beverage containers in an EPR for Packaging Program will also result in a loss of the important benefits associated with Bottle Bills such as litter reduction, increased recycling of beverage containers, and the development of reusable beverage container systems.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> Oregon Redemption Center, [Bottle Drop](#).

<sup>29</sup> Bryna Zumer, [Stop Littering! Trash on State Roads Cost Maryland Taxpayers \\$39M in 5 Years](#), Fox News. (Dec. 3, 2021).

<sup>30</sup> [Maryland Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility for Packaging Materials Act](#). (2022).

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* at Section 2, Subsection c.





A. The Information in the Needs Assessment Will Not Have an Impact on the Decision of Whether Maryland Should Develop a Bottle Bill Program.

The Needs Assessment requires an independent consultant to evaluate numerous metrics and details about the amount and disposition of packaging waste in Maryland, as well as how Maryland’s waste and recycling systems currently operate. Understanding this information is important to provide a clear picture of Maryland’s waste management system in order to design a tailored EPR for Packaging program. However, this information is not necessary to understanding whether the state should pursue a Bottle Bill.

Beverage containers are highly recyclable. The issue is that Maryland’s existing recycling system is not capturing enough of the containers and the containers that are captured are not recycled because they are highly contaminated. As a result, a significant amount of beverage containers is littered across the state or disposed of in landfills and incinerators. The clear solution to this problem is to enact a Bottle Bill program. This will create an independent, producer-funded recycling program for these containers. All the jurisdictions which currently have Bottle Bill programs have done so without performing a needs assessment.

The time to act is now. Maryland cannot afford to continue to wait to take action to address the littering and under recycling of beverage containers. The deadline for completing the needs assessment has already been pushed back from the initial deadline of July 2024. It is likely the deadline will be extended further. Developing a needs assessment and an EPR for Packaging program is time intensive. Maine enacted the first EPR for Packaging law in the nation in 2021. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection is only finalizing the rules to implement the program now. The program is not expected to be operational until 2027, six years after the legislature enacted the law. The three other states with EPR for Packaging laws – California, Colorado, and Oregon – are operating under similar timeframes.

B. Including Beverage Containers in an EPR for Packaging Program Will Reduce the Benefits to the State.

A Bottle Bill should not be abandoned for the development of an EPR for Packaging program that covers beverage containers. Instead, Maryland must develop both systems. Doing so will maximize the benefits associated with both programs.

Including beverage containers in an EPR for Packaging program minimizes the effectiveness of the program while sacrificing the benefits associated with a Bottle Bill. Including beverage containers in an EPR for Packaging program keeps the beverage containers in the curbside recycling system, rather than having them separated and managed through their own dedicated program as is the case with a Bottle Bill. As a result, the beverage containers continue to be heavily contaminated which limits their marketability for the use in manufacturing new containers. Removing these containers will allow them to be recycled at significantly higher rates. Moreover, it will also enable a future EPR for Packaging Program to focus on setting up collection and recycling systems for harder to recycle





materials. In fact, every state with a Bottle Bill program has higher overall recycling rates because their curbside recycling systems can be tailored to maximize recycling of other commodities.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, without a standalone Bottle Bill Maryland won't see significant litter reductions. A central part of Bottle Bill programs is that every container sold has a refundable deposit placed on it to incentivize consumers to bring the empty container back for recycling. This incentive is what reduces litter because the containers now have an economic value. When beverage containers are included in an EPR for Packaging program they don't have a deposit and therefore continue to be littered.

#### IV. Conclusion

The time to act is now. HB 735 will improve recycling, create green jobs, and reduce litter which will protect Maryland's land, rivers, lakes, and oceans. With HB 735, Maryland can create a robust and effective Bottle Bill program that will protect the environment and the economy. For these reasons, Just Zero urges you to support this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Blair, Esq.  
Policy and Advocacy Director  
Just Zero

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<sup>32</sup> Supra, note 18.

# **Testimony in support of HB0735.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

2/28/2024

Richard Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON HB#0735 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

**TO:** Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Maryland has an ambitious program to reduce waste and pollution. This bill is one component of that strategy dealing specifically with reduction in plastic waste from the use of plastic bottles. It implements a program to deal with recycling of those bottles and reduction of litter from discarding them into the environment.

According to a report from the World Economic Forum discussing a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) “We Can Cut Plastic Pollution by 80% by 2040 – here’s how” reduction of plastic bottle usage is a component of achieving that goal. <sup>1</sup>

NPR reported “The plastic problem isn't your fault, but you can be part of the solution.” <sup>2</sup> This forward looking bill says that Maryland is listening and will become a model on adopting solutions to achieve our environmental goals.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#0735.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/06/reduce-plastic-pollution-unesp/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/12/1015296355/zero-waste-single-use-plastic-trash-recycle>

# **HB 735\_Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home\_FAV.**

Uploaded by: Robert Simon

Position: FAV



# Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

Responding to the cry of the Earth  
and the cry of the poor.

Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
February 28, 2024

**Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)  
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on  
HB 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based upon, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation. MCCH is a grassroots voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics—over 400 Maryland Catholics have already signed our statement of support for key environmental bills in this session of the General Assembly—but it should be distinguished as an organization from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy interests of the bishops who lead these three dioceses.

**MCCH would like to express its strong support for the passage of House Bill 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.**

We see it on our highways, byways, city streets, county roads, pastures, fields, and woods. We see it in our waterways, streams, and creeks. Discarded aluminum cans, plastic, and glass bottles are everywhere. It contaminates our soil, wastes needed resources, and—if not dumped there already—the litter eventually flows to our treasured Chesapeake Bay and then into our ocean. It is a threat to our human health and to wildlife. The plastic beverage containers break up into small pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Scientists estimate that humans are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic weekly. And then there is the intangible harm. The dumping of trash reinforces the philosophy that those who are able can engage in excessive consumerism and waste resources without any regard to the effect it has on others. Something must be done.

As Maryland Catholics, when advocating for the care of our common home, we are guided by the words of Pope Francis. In his 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*,<sup>1</sup> the Pope states "Political activity on the local level could also be directed to modifying consumption, developing an economy of waste disposal and recycling." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 180) Further, "Efforts to promote a sustainable use of natural resources are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits in the medium term." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 191). In this connection, he specifically mentions "intelligent and profitable ways of reusing, revamping, and recycling." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 192)

In his 2023 apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum*,<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis observes "Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal,

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<sup>1</sup> The English text of the encyclical, to which the paragraph numbers in the following parentheses refer, can be found at: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

<sup>2</sup> The English text of this apostolic exhortation, to which the paragraph numbers in the parentheses refer, can be found at: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html).

family and community habits are changing is ... helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society” (*Laudate Deum*, no. 71).

House Bill 735 heeds the Pope’s cry. When enacted, it will respond to wasting resources and will create a cultural change. Some of the benefits include capturing more than 3 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2 billion plastic bottles, thereby increasing the rate of recycling in the state from 23 percent of containers to more than 90 percent. Targeted goals for recycled products will generate an additional 11,305 tons of aluminum, 44,066 tons of PET plastic, 3,207 tons of HDPE plastic, and 140,923 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers. As a result of not having to produce new cans and bottles from virgin materials, 195,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent annually—the equivalent of removing the emissions of 42,000 cars—would be eliminated. Currently, the disposal costs in our landfills and incinerators are borne by taxpayers and local governments. These costs will be reduced because beverage producers would finance the costs of collection and processing of the three-quarters of beverage containers currently being disposed or littered, as well as the collection and processing of some containers currently recycled curbside. Lastly, the bottle bill will redirect investment in refillable and reusable beverage container systems and create jobs. Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration.<sup>3</sup>

House Bill 735 gives value to not littering and could create a cultural change. Currently 10 states covering 90 million people have successful recycling programs.<sup>4</sup> When consumers receive cash for empty beverage containers, there is an incentive not to litter. This incentive over time can become part of the tapestry of our culture. Like wearing seatbelts, once consumers are accustomed again to refunding empty bottle containers, personal changes will lead to cultural changes which will lead to saving natural resources and reducing litter. At one time Maryland had a bottle refund program. Now is the time to bring back the bottle bill and begin the cultural change.

For these reasons we strongly urge your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable** report on House Bill 735.

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<sup>3</sup> Maryland Sierra Club, “Maryland Needs a Bottle Bill! HB735/SB642” [Fact Sheet], 2024.

<sup>4</sup> California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont. Redemption rates in 2019 ranged from 59 percent to 91 percent. There are currently 72 container deposit programs worldwide in 61 countries. Increased interest in the past decade has been fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. Susan Collins, “International Embrace,” *Plastics Recycling Update*, Winter 2020, pp. 38-43.

# **FAV\_HB735BevDepRef - Waterkeepers Chesapeake.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robin Broder

Position: FAV



## **HB 735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Hearing Date: February 28, 2024**

### **Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

Waterkeepers Chesapeake supports HB735 and urges a FAVORABLE report. HB 735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction would set up a recycling refund program for beverage containers. The most effective recycling programs in the United States are in the 10 states where consumers can get a refund in exchange for returning their beverage container for recycling. HB735 will bring this program to Maryland.

The ten states with recycling refund programs supply 50% of our nation's recyclable glass supply.<sup>1</sup> In states with recycling refunds, the recycling rate for plastic bottles is 67%. States without a recycling refund program recycle 17% of their plastic bottles on average.<sup>2</sup> States with recycling refund programs have 50% less litter than other states.<sup>3</sup>

The beverage container deposit program would be a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, depending on container size. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. The program would be self-financing from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. Ten percent of unclaimed deposits would fund a Grant Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers.

This is a tried and true, effective policy that will significantly reduce trash and litter in our streets, neighborhoods and waterways.

By contrast, Maryland taxpayers are funding significant costs associated with litter. According to MDOT, the SHA alone spends nearly \$8M annually to remove approximately 5,300 truckloads of litter. According to the agency "that's more than 27,000 truckloads and nearly \$40 million" every 5 years. Maryland local governments each fund litter cleanup programs. Organizations across Maryland conduct hundreds of cleanups with thousands of volunteers annually. Perhaps the

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<sup>1</sup> Glass Packaging Institute, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of Containers and Packaging Recycling Rates 2021

<sup>3</sup> Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study <https://kab.org/litter-study>



[Type here]

largest cost is that to our society. Health professionals tell us children who grow up in communities with litter are less likely to have successful outcomes. In addition, microplastics pose an urgent public health threat.

About 2.6 billion plastic beverage containers are not recycled in Maryland and are left in the environment<sup>4</sup> --- in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways – or incinerated. Plastic beverage containers pollute our waterways and pose a threat to wildlife and human health. Plastic bottles break down from friction or sunlight/UV exposure creating microplastics -- pieces of plastic less than 5 millimeters in size. As microplastics travel around the environment by wind, rain runoff, or surface currents, they have plenty of opportunities to interact with plants, animals and humans through ingestion or inhalation. Unfortunately, exposure to microplastics can lead to a host of human health issues<sup>5</sup> including reproductive deficiency, weight gain and endocrine disruption, and cancer. These health issues are due to chemical makeup of all sorts of plastics, including the chemical additives that give plastics their properties such as coloring agents, plasticizers, or forever chemicals known as PFAS.

Recycling refund programs for beverage containers go hand in hand with legislation passed last year initiating the process to adopt producer responsibility for packaging. It is estimated that 40 to 60 percent of packaging is beverage containers.<sup>6</sup> Producer responsibility programs help us *reduce* our volume of waste. Recycling refund programs help us *reuse* and *recycle* a major portion of the packaging waste stream.

Recycling refund programs are a proven winner. We respectfully urge this committee to give HB753 a favorable report.

Contact:

Robin Broder, Deputy Director  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake  
robin@waterkeeperschesapeake.org

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<sup>4</sup> Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Data Analysis, based on 2019 data.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Programme, <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/blog/microplastics-human-health-how-much-do-they-harm-us>, June 2023

<sup>6</sup> National Stewardship Action Council

# **Glass Packaging Institute (GPI) Testimony - Maryla**

Uploaded by: Scott DeFife

Position: FAV



February 26, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chairman  
Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 250  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Testimony for House Bill 735– The MD Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program Support**

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Dear Chairman Korman and Committee Members:

The Glass Packaging Institute (GPI) offers the following comments in support of House Bill 735, which would create a deposit return/recycling refund program for beverage containers in the State, and to answer any questions the committee may have regarding the manufacturing or recycling of glass containers.

GPI is the North American trade association for the glass food and beverage manufacturing companies, glass recycling processors, raw material providers and other supply chain partners within the industry. GPI and its members work closely with local and state governments throughout the country on issues surrounding sustainability, recycling, packaging manufacturing and energy use. We are working nationally and, in most states, to improve the glass recycling infrastructure and system to help achieve a 50 percent consumer glass recycling rate, and advance policies that further that goal.

**Glass Container Recycling Background**

Glass is a core circular packaging material which is reusable, refillable, and endlessly recyclable. Glass containers are largely used for food or beverage products, and glass is the only packaging material generally recognized as safe by FDA for all food and beverage products. Over 70 percent of glass containers are used for some sort of beverage product. Public sentiment strongly rates glass as one of the most supported materials in the recycling stream, and glass has the strongest profile to aid in refillable beverage systems.

The glass container manufacturing industry has a significant stake in the effectiveness of glass recycling programs. Recycled glass is a key component of the manufacturing process. The industry purchases about 2.3 million tons of recycled glass each year and

the average bottle or jar produced in the U.S. contains from 25 to 33 percent recycled glass. Glass made in regions with high glass recovery rates, such as deposit return systems, have much greater opportunity for more recycled content. For every 10% of recycled glass added to the batch mix, energy usage can be reduced 2-3 percent, with additional corresponding reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. When you add the benefit of what is a better than 1 to 1 offset of raw materials saved by using recycled glass to make new containers, it is clear that using recycled glass has significant benefits to the environment of the region and should be prioritized.

Quality and contamination are key differentiators to the value and potential end-markets for recycled glass. We estimate that nearly 60 percent of the glass cullet that makes it back to a container plant for reuse originates from the ten bottle bills states, which provide the highest volume of clean, source-separated glass. This separation drastically reduces contamination, increases the value, and provides the best opportunity to return the glass to a manufactured product.

Critically, containers recovered in a deposit return system avoid the most common fate and costs associated with glass in the commingled single-stream system, which is purposeful or passive landfill disposal. Curbside material that flows through many material recovery facilities *can* be recycled into new containers, and several MRFs do so quite well, but it is completely dependent on the capabilities of the facility receiving the material and the yield is far lower. While less expensive for collection costs, the value of most materials in these single-stream systems, and especially glass, is harmed from the moment the typical recycling truck hydraulic press crushes the mixed load of materials. Glass suffers to a larger degree due to how most MRFs then process the broken glass as a “negative sort”, screening the smaller fragment material into a pile of residuals, while the larger media is sorted whole or in larger segments and baled. The glass commodity is laden with residual contamination, usually shredded paper, small plastics, and other small non-recyclables that do not belong in the bin in the first place.

Often, this leads local government officials and their contract service partners to suggest that the “glass commodity” value is negative. Without context, the glass commodity at most MRFs is going to be 30-50 percent non-glass residue (NGR), and then the glass processor must haul that contamination and pay the landfill tip fee, which is what results in the negative value for the ton of material. The benefit of a deposit return system is that it preserves positive market value of the glass, dramatically increases yield from the bottle, and ensures the potential of highest best use, while also allowing for a broader variety of end-market uses that include the same ones as single-stream.

As I have testified in prior years before this committee, there are end-markets for glass containers made in three neighboring states: Pennsylvania, Virginia and New Jersey. There is glass processing in Pennsylvania and a movement to add capacity in New Jersey and Virginia. In addition, one of our member companies has added a pre-cleaning location in Baltimore that can accept more glass than it is currently getting. Glass from

Maryland consumers should not be going to landfill. A bottle deposit program would triple or potentially quadruple the glass recovery and recycling rate for the state of Maryland and could work on its own or within an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program.

With regard to EPR, while the EPR needs assessment is beginning soon based on the passage of SB 222 into law last year, we know much more today about the potential outcomes of that assessment than we did a year ago. In Washington state, a preliminary study that worked on a part of the state needs assessment determined that the policy combination that produced that highest recovery and recycling rates was an EPR that was combined with a beverage container deposit program. In fact, the combined policy was the only option that was found to meet the state's recycling goals. In Colorado, a state without a DRS, and where I serve on the State EPR Advisory Board, the draft proposed needs assessment for the most involved EPR system – but without an DRS modeled – could only suggest an increase of recycling rates from around 25% to near 50% in the first five years and topped out closer to 60 percent recovery and recycling by 2035. A deposit return system should be contemplated as a part of the EPR system being considered if Maryland wants to maximize its recycling.

This is even more important for glass. We currently estimate that roughly one-third of the glass in Maryland is recovered. Montgomery County dual-stream collection aides that number. Our research indicates that a well-constructed EPR program might double that recovery, but the yield loss from the curbside material lost to residual and landfill would mean less than half that would make it back into feedstock for new bottles. A DRS system like that envisioned in HB 735 on top of the EPR would nearly triple the recovery of glass and dramatically increase the quality of the material so that the vast majority would be able to be made into new bottles in the region.

As to the specific provisions on HB 735, we would like to highlight several key points that show that this policy concept has advanced considerably in the past several years and need not be compared to systems or debates of the past.

- The majority of the responsibility for operating the program is given over to a stewardship organization. There is oversight from the Department of the Environment. This is consistent with best practice principles on modern management of the container deposit program. While there could be some more responsibility given to the private sector, the construct strikes a balance compared to government run programs.
- The bill includes an Advisory Council that pulls in additional stakeholders who can assist in keeping the program balanced and modern, plus add transparency and accountability.
- Most all beverages are included, and traditionally recyclable materials are all included. This is far better than having an exhaustive list and definitions of varieties of beverages in statute that will constantly need to be tweaked and modified to accommodate innovation in the beverage industry.

- Accommodation has been made for a differential redemption value based on size, which is reasonable, and a wide variety of reasonable consumer sized containers are included, as well as a variety of convenient redemption alternatives – drop off centers, bag drop programs and in-person return centers. We believe that convenience is key, but that not all returns should be forced back into a specific retail establishment. A series of well-placed redemption centers and drop-off locations can alleviate the need to force returns into smaller retail stores.
- We generally do not support provisions that compensate private MRF operators for the “loss” of revenue that may come with the creation of a deposit refund program; however, the provision in HB 735 meets our criteria for a transition system that takes into account the loss of revenue from specific commodity streams being moved away from the curbside system, while also accounting for the savings to the governments attributable to less landfill costs, lower processing expense and higher value to other remaining commodity streams from less contamination.
- I would like to note a concept in the bill that I recall discussing with the committee a couple of years ago. Deposit return programs are aided by the active involvement of local governments, so we support the concept that a city or county could create their own redemption center(s) and participate in the benefits of the program as long as they meet all the same requirements of the other program contractors.
- We support the encouragement of refill/reuse programs. While the provisions in HB 735 are aggressive, a deposit return and recovery system is an essential element for beverage refill/reuse. Glass containers are an ideal material for meeting that need, and we support the inclusion of explicit infrastructure funds dedicated to building out the washing and sterilization facilities.

I have referenced quality and yield issues throughout my testimony, so I would like to call attention to pictures and graphics that I have included with my testimony.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on the central role a container deposit program can provide the State of Maryland in creating a higher quality and effective glass recycling system. We look forward to answering your questions about glass and glass recycling and are committed to working with the Committee constructively to enhance glass recovery and recycling in Maryland. Please do not hesitate to call on us should you have any additional glass or glass recycling questions.

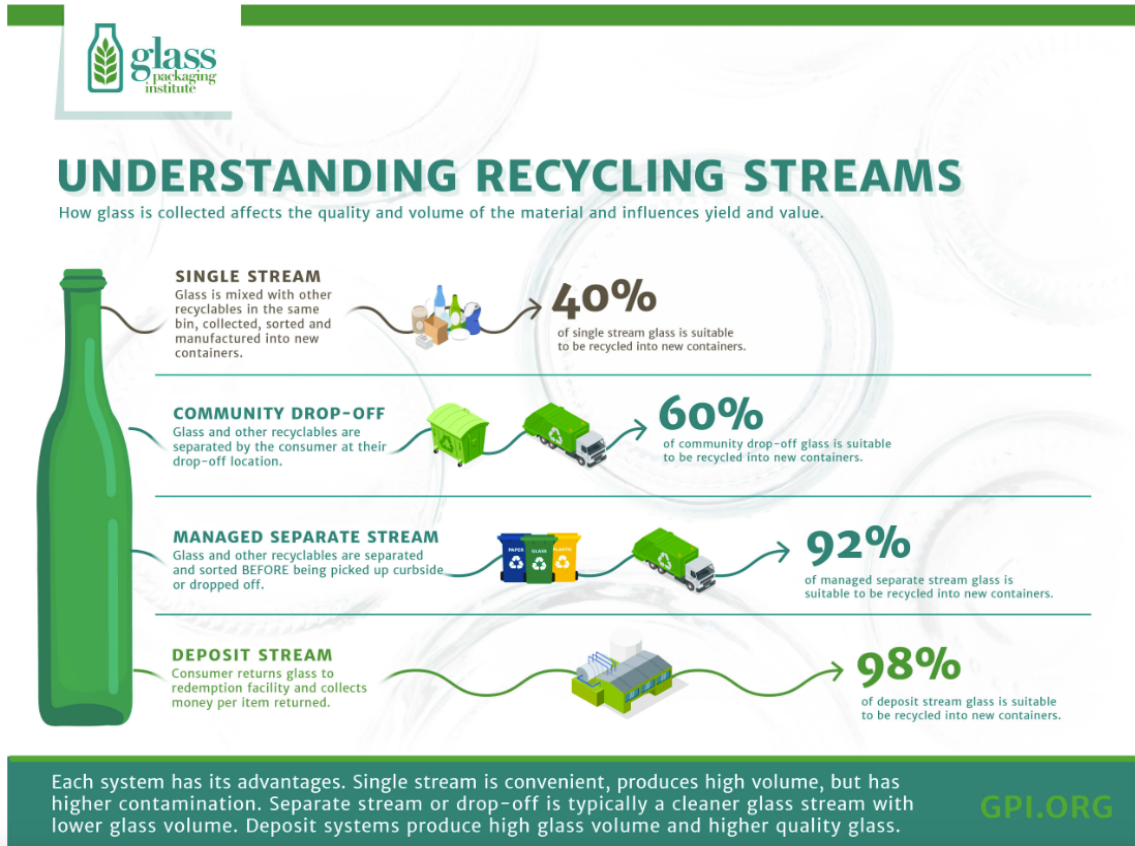
Sincerely,



Scott DeFife  
President  
Glass Packaging Institute  
[sdefife@gpi.org](mailto:sdefife@gpi.org)

Addendum:

*Infographic on Efficiency and Yield-Loss from different glass collection streams*



*Picture of a Commingled Single Stream Recycled "Glass" - as delivered from a Materials Recovery Facility. Requires intensive sorting and cleaning prior to meeting furnace-ready specifications.*





*Picture of green bottle bill glass delivered from redemption centers to transfer facility.*





**HB735BevDepRefTFM Support 022224 (2).pdf**

Uploaded by: shari wilson

Position: FAV



**HB 735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**  
**Date: February 22, 2024**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

We enthusiastically support HB 735. This bill would set up a recycling refund program for beverage containers. We all know the most effective recycling programs in the United States are in the 10 states where consumers can get a refund in exchange for returning their beverage container for recycling. HB 735 will bring this program to Maryland.

**The ten states with recycling refund programs supply 50% of our nation's recyclable glass supply. <sup>1</sup>**

**In states with recycling refunds, the recycling rate for plastic bottles is 67%. States without a recycling refund program recycle 17% of their plastic bottles on average.<sup>2</sup>**

**States with recycling refund programs have 50% less litter than other states. <sup>3</sup>**

That's how effective these programs are. This is a tried and true policy that will significantly reduce trash and litter in our streets, neighborhoods and waterways.

By contrast, where we stand now has taxpayers funding significant costs associated with litter. Here are just a few small examples. According to MDOT, the SHA alone spends nearly \$8M annually to remove approximately 5,300 truckloads of litter. According to the agency "that's more than 27,000 truckloads and nearly \$40 million" every 5 years. Maryland local governments each fund litter cleanup programs. Trash Free Maryland knows of 708 cleanups across Maryland conducted by thousands of volunteers annually and this is limited only to those clean-ups publicly recruiting volunteers. There are thousands more conducted by residents in their communities. Perhaps the largest cost is that to our society. Health professionals tell us children who grow up in communities with litter are less likely to have successful outcomes. Litter affects us all.

All of these costs are avoidable! There are better ways and this bill brings one of the most effective ways to reduce litter to Maryland.

We also note recycling refund programs for beverage containers go hand in hand with legislation passed last year initiating the process to adopt producer responsibility for packaging. It is estimated that 40 to 60 percent of packaging is beverage containers.<sup>4</sup> Producer responsibility programs help us *reduce* our volume of waste. Recycling refund programs help us *reuse* and *recycle* a major portion of the packaging waste stream.

Marylanders take great pride in our recycling efforts and are fed up with trash. A recycling refund program is a proven winner. We look forward to working with you on this exciting and highly effective policy. We respectfully urge your favorable consideration.

Contact: Shari Wilson, Trash Free Maryland ([shari@trashfreemaryland.org](mailto:shari@trashfreemaryland.org))

Anacostia Waterkeeper

Arundel Rivers Federation

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<sup>1</sup> Glass Packaging Institute 2023

<sup>2</sup> The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of Containers and Packaging Recycling Rates 2021

<sup>3</sup> Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study <https://kab.org/litter-study>

<sup>4</sup> National Stewardship Action Council

Assateague Coastal Trust

Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Blue Water Baltimore

Corsica River Conservancy

Environment Maryland

Environmental Justice Ministry Team, Cedar Lane UU Congregation

Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Maryland Catholics for our Common Home

Maryland Conservation Council

Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing

Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Maryland Ornithological Society

Maryland PIRG

National Aquarium

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Rock Creek Conservancy

Shore Rivers

Surfrider Foundation Ocean City

The Story of Stuff Project

Trash Free Maryland

Waterkeepers Chesapeake



# **HB735\_City of College Park\_FAV**

Uploaded by: Stephanie Anderson

Position: FAV



# CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

7401 BALTIMORE AVENUE SUITE 201 COLLEGE PARK MD 20740 | COLLEGE PARKMD.GOV

March 6, 2024

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Delegate Marc Korman, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### Re: HB 735 Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Bill

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The City Council considered and voted unanimously to support HB 735. Container deposit programs have been proven to increase recycling and to reduce waste. This bill creates an effective system that will benefit the State by recycling 90 percent of the five billion containers used in Maryland every year, and by significantly reducing litter and tipping fees that localities currently pay to bury materials that should be recycled. These benefits can be accomplished without high costs to the State.

The City spends about \$50,000 annually on tipping fees at the County recycling facility. If this legislation is enacted, we anticipate saving approximately \$20,000 in tipping fees each year.

Please support this legislation and pass it favorably out of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

Sincerely,

Fazlul Kabir  
Mayor

cc: 21<sup>st</sup> District Delegation

# **Testimony in Support of HB735 - Maryland Beverage**

Uploaded by: Tom Taylor

Position: FAV



## **Testimony in Support of HB735 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

February 28, 2024

To the Chair and Members of the Committee:

Please support HB 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. As an active community volunteer who is engaged in zero waste efforts, I fully support this legislation.

In states where there are similar programs, recycling rates are significantly higher. This program will have a great impact in supporting Maryland's waste reduction goals and in reducing litter.

It is a worthy environmental program. Please give a favorable report on HB735.

Sincerely,

Tom Taylor  
11-G Laurel Hill Road  
Greenbelt, MD 20770  
301-513-9524

# **Anacostia Riverkeeper Testimony HB 0735 on Contain**

Uploaded by: Trey Sherard

Position: FAV



# ANACOSTIA RIVERKEEPER®

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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Testimony to the Maryland House of Delegates Environment and Transportation  
Committee on HB 735,

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Favorable

Anacostia Riverkeeper wholeheartedly supports HB 735.

Over half a million Marylanders live in the Anacostia River's watershed in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, nearly 10% of the state's population. Combined with the Marylanders living in the Baltimore Harbor watershed, nearly a quarter of the state's population lives in a jurisdiction with an EPA required pollution diet for trash. In fact, Maryland has the dubious distinction of being home to two of only three bodies of water in the entire United States with a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Trash.

Of all the trash Anacostia Riverkeeper captures and documents from trash traps in the watershed, including Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, roughly 60% by weight is solely plastic bottles. For reference, we and our partners in both counties empty the contents of almost all the bottles captured, so this is a rigorous and conservative accounting of trash by weight. In land-based cleanups where glass bottles are more easily captured but can dominate the weight data vs plastic bottles, beverage containers including aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and glass bottles make up over 50% of the weight of all litter picked up by thousands of volunteers annually in our watershed.

This problem is unnecessary – ten states already have some version of a beverage container return and refund law on the books. These states see much higher actual waste diversion and recycling rates than we currently enjoy in Maryland, and much less harmful plastic and other beverage container pollution ruining the recreational value of their wild areas, choking and poisoning their wildlife, and filling their residents with an ever increasing number of microplastics. Please support HB 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

Trey Sherard, Anacostia Riverkeeper



# **ANACOSTIA RIVERKEEPER®**

**CRI Supports MD HB735 02-26-2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Madeline Walker

Position: FWA



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4361 Keystone Ave. • Culver City, CA 90232  
Telephone (310) 559-7451 • Fax (888) 839-3857  
[www.container-recycling.org](http://www.container-recycling.org)  
[www.bottlebill.org](http://www.bottlebill.org)

February 26, 2024

Environment & Transportation Committee  
Delegate Mark Korman, Chairman; Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair  
House Office Building, Room 251  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in support of House Bill 735, “Maryland Beverage Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program,” a bill that would establish a beverage container deposit program in Maryland.

We applaud the bill for:

1. Incorporating most beverage types into the proposed deposit program, including **wine and liquor**. Doing so will generate clean, high-quality glass that is desired by glass manufacturers, and will help alleviate the pressure that the state has been experiencing to find aggregate uses for glass collected through municipal programs.
2. Including a **wide scope of beverage containers**, as per the definition.
3. Specifying a **deposit of 10¢ for containers less than or equal to 24 fluid ounces and 15¢ for containers more than 24 ounces**, with options to increase the refund value in the future.
4. Including **robust performance targets** as well as a description of the penalties for not completing these targets.

*Ten cents is a strong financial incentive for people to return containers rather than throw them in the trash or litter them.* Michigan and Oregon, the two U.S. states with dime deposits, have achieved much higher redemption rates—76% and 86% respectively in 2022—than the deposit states with 5¢ deposits (where reported redemption rates range from 38% to 72%). When consumers who purchased the drinks do not take bottles and cans in for refund themselves, there are always other people and groups ready to do the redemption for them to generate income.

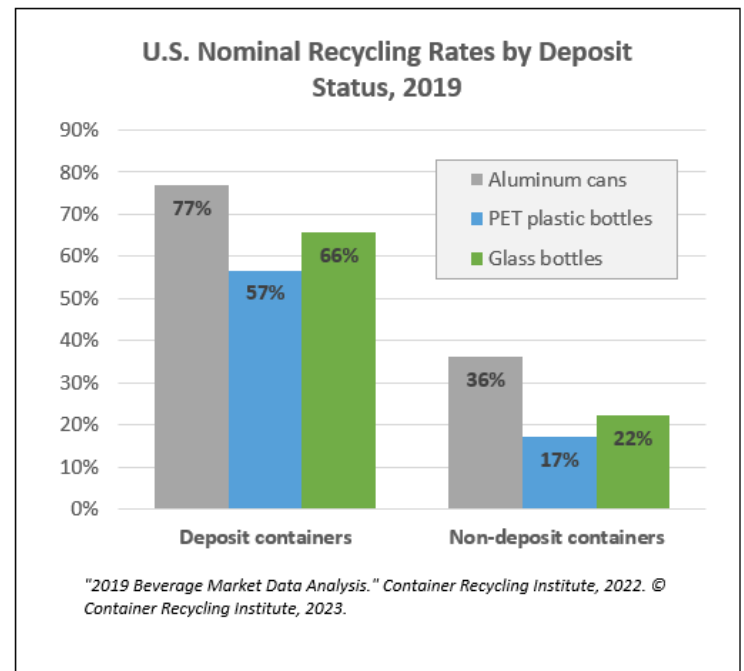
For more than 50 years, beverage container deposit laws, or “bottle bills,” have been successful in achieving recycling rates that are up to 3 times higher than those of bottles and cans without deposits. As the graphic on the following page shows, more than three quarters (77%) of aluminum cans with 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 76% of the 5.9 billion beverage bottles and cans sold in Maryland in 2021 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.
- **Promoting job growth;** it is estimated that there are over 20,000 jobs resulting from the existing deposit return systems in the 10 states where the law exists.

If Maryland were to pass this deposit bill, CRI estimates that the state would recycle **3.3 billion additional containers annually—or just over 208,000 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 212,304 tons of greenhouse gas emissions: **an amount equivalent to taking almost 46,000 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.

<b>Selected plastics reduction commitments by global brands</b>		
<b>Company</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Commitment or target</b>
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

*Reprinted from CRI's Winter 2018 newsletter*

*© Container Recycling Institute, 2018*

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).

Deposits on beverage containers are now available to over 553 million people worldwide. With the announcement of multiple new deposit laws in 2022 and 2023 (including Uruguay, Singapore, Poland, and Czechia), **694 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.

While we support the passage of this bill, we would like to suggest the following amendments to a few of the definitions. The definition of “distributor” needs more details to ensure that it includes direct sales to consumers, like home and office delivery and online sales. Additionally, while we applaud the wide scope of containers included in the program, the definition of “beverage container” may need to be more specific and describe whether certain atypical containers (pouches, aseptics, boxes) are included in the bill or not. California’s recent amendments serve as a good example of what is included in the program, as they just expanded to these types of containers.

In sum, CRI supports the passage of a beverage container deposit law in Maryland. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



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.*



**2-26-24 CMI Support with Amends HB 735.pdf**

Uploaded by: Scott Breen

Position: FWA



February 26, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Support with suggested amendments for HB 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI) supports with amendments HB 735, the proposal from Rep. Terrasa to create a Maryland beverage container recycling refund program. CMI urges the committee to consider CMI's suggested amendments and advance this important legislation.

CMI is the U.S. trade association representing metal can makers and their suppliers. The industry employs more than 28,000 people, and CMI members have facilities in 33 states, including Maryland. CMI member Constellium, a leading recycler of used beverage cans into can sheet that is used to make new aluminum cans, has its U.S. headquarters in Baltimore. CMI members are proud to make the most sustainable beverage package.

CMI aluminum beverage can industry members are committed to achieving ambitious national recycling rate [targets](#) for aluminum beverage cans starting with a 70 percent rate by 2030. While the U.S. aluminum beverage can recycling rate in 2020 was an industry-leading 45 percent, reaching this target will require effective policy solutions, the foremost tool being a beverage container recycling refund program. CMI supports recycling refund programs because they are proven to consistently deliver high recycling rates and are a vital source of used beverage cans, which are used to make can sheet for new aluminum beverage cans. The Container Recycling Institute (CRI) determined that [40 percent](#) of recycled aluminum beverage cans come from the 10 deposit states even though they account for only 25 percent of aluminum beverage cans sold. This is because aluminum beverage cans sold today in the United States with a deposit average a [77 percent](#) recycling rate while aluminum beverage cans sold without a deposit average just 36 percent.

In Maryland, there is a lot of room for improvement in recycling. The Recycling Partnership's *2024 State of Recycling Report* [states](#) that Maryland's residential recycling rate is only 21 percent. This equates to 678,000 tons of recyclable material lost to landfills or the environment annually. This Maryland recycling rate aligns with CRI [determining](#) that only 23 percent of the 5.6 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland in 2019 were recycled.

The aluminum beverage cans in Maryland going to landfill is particularly wasteful given the significant environmental and economic impact of aluminum beverage can recycling. On the environment side, recycled aluminum is [94 percent](#) less carbon intensive than making primary aluminum. Further, recycling just one aluminum beverage can [provides](#) enough energy savings to power a 45-inch LED

TV for six hours. Beyond the lower environmental impact, recycling aluminum generates money and creates jobs. Aluminum beverage cans are consistently one of the most valuable recyclable commodities. This is why aluminum cans [make up](#) only three percent by weight but nearly one third of the total revenue of all recyclables at single-family households. Recycling beverage cans also provides feedstock for domestic manufacturers. Americans working in these U.S. facilities recycle [more than 90,000](#) aluminum beverage cans each minute, which is part of how aluminum beverage cans manufactured in the United States average [73 percent](#) recycled content.

The recycling refunds program that HB 735 would create would mean more aluminum beverage cans recycled into new cans at U.S. facilities, thereby helping the economy and the environment. CMI believes HB 735 would be strengthened with the following amendments:

- Start the variable deposit at 5 cents for beverage containers 24 ounces or less and 10 cents for beverage containers greater than 24 ounces for a couple years with an automatic increase to 10 cents and 15 cents, respectively, to ease consumers into paying the refundable deposit.
- Make the beverage container stewardship organization responsible for installing, servicing, and maintaining the beverage container redemption mechanisms rather than issuing handling fees to redemption facilities, retailers, or other persons that accept empty redeemable beverage containers for redemption.
- Keep financial responsibility on distributors and importers and do not include a provision where container manufacturers are financially responsible when producers sell under their own brand or where there is a lack of identification of a brand.
- Add as a factor in determining producer fees the relative market value of the beverage container.
- Consider if mandating a state-specific UPC barcode is legal and is feasible given the realities with manufacturing, inventorying, and delivering of beverage containers.
- Remove the legally mandated increase in market share of reusable beverage containers that comes with the performance target and the lower producer fees for reusable beverage containers; the decree to increase the use of reusable beverage containers by a certain amount is based on the assumption that reusables always have a lower environmental impact, but aluminum beverage cans at the high recycling rates that recycling refunds will deliver have a comparable environmental impact as reusable beverage containers.

HB 735 is an important step in creating a more circular economy in Maryland so more aluminum beverage cans are collected and not lost to landfill. Maryland has an opportunity to lead the country by implementing a modern recycling refund program. It would then become a more important source for used beverage cans that are highly valued and sought after by aluminum suppliers. CMI urges you and your colleagues to consider its suggested amendments to HB 735, amend the bill, and advance it out of committee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Scott Breen  
Senior Vice President, Sustainability  
Can Manufacturers Institute

# **HB735 recycling.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bob Douglas

Position: UNF

## OPPOSE HB 735

# Licensed Beverage Distributors of Maryland

Re: HB 7235- Md. Beverage Containers Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

The licensed beverage distributors of Maryland appreciate and support efforts to reduce litter and improve recycling in Maryland. This bill, however, is a good intention gone awry. Others have pointed out various shortcomings with this proposal. They include (1) hampering profitable municipal recycling plans, (2) impacting revenues for many small businesses, including distributors, retailers, and bottlers (3) forcing the creation of a new and expensive labor-intensive endeavor to establish, manage and operate the redemption system. It also forces the creation of a state office to regulate, oversee and administer the system.

The bill engenders all these costly and harmful effects when improvement to existing recycling systems would also achieve its goals. In many ways, this bill suffers from throwing the baby out with the bath water.

As for wholesalers, they support recycling efforts, improving the environment, and reducing litter. We rarely oppose the efforts when they make sense. This plan does not. For example, it requires wholesalers to charge and collect each year what amounts to a tax on a billion bottles, create a non-profit to handle the collected bottle fee and then equip this non-profit to distribute the funds for refunds or reimbursement for recycling operating expenses. At the same time, wholesalers must provide records of all the transactions and generate annual reports for State oversight.

All this effort is predicated on the assumption people would prefer to take their bottles to a recycling refund location than put the bottles on the curb for recycling pick-up. When picked up by the local government truck, the recycling generates income and reduces the demand for higher taxes to fund government operations. The bottom line: the squeeze is not worth the juice for anyone.

Licensed Beverage Distributors of Maryland support efforts to increase recycling of beverage containers. We would like to work with others on solutions to these issues in Maryland. HB 735 is not the way to do this. We request an unfavorable report on HB 735.

Bob Douglas, Licensed Beverage Distributors of Maryland.  
410-456-9319. [Bobdouglasoffice@gmail.com](mailto:Bobdouglasoffice@gmail.com)

**HB735\_RestaurantAssoc\_Thompson\_UNFAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melvin Thompson

Position: UNF



## HOUSE BILL 735

### *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

February 28, 2024

#### **Position: Unfavorable**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

On behalf of members of the *Restaurant Association of Maryland*, we oppose HB 735. This legislation would require beverage distributors (wholesalers) to include a redeemable beverage container refund value as part of the wholesale price of beverage containers sold to restaurants, bars, and other retailers. The legislation prohibits restaurants, bars and other “on-premises sellers” from including the refund value of redeemable beverage containers in the retail price when sold to customers.

Despite language in the bill that allows on-premises sellers to arrange for pickup of empty redeemable beverage containers (with deposits refunded and materials handling fee paid) by a beverage container stewardship organization, many questions remain about the related logistics and prevalence of such stewardship organizations, particularly in less-populated areas of the state. Moreover, restaurants and bars in locations with limited storage space or in properties with shared disposal facilities (e.g., shopping centers, malls, etc.) would face challenges separately storing their beverage containers for pickup/redemption.

In 2023, the General Assembly passed legislation (SB 222) that requires the Maryland Department of Environment to hire a consultant to conduct a statewide recycling needs assessment and report the results by July 30, 2024. This new law also establishes an advisory council to provide advice and make recommendations for implementing a producer responsibility program for packaging materials (report due by December 1, 2024). We believe it would be prudent for the General Assembly to wait until after the recycling needs assessment report becomes available and producer responsibility program advisory council recommendations before giving serious consideration to any other recycling-related policy.

For these reasons, we oppose HB 735 and request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melvin R. Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melvin R. Thompson  
Senior Vice President  
Government Affairs and Public Policy



**HB735\_MAPDA\_unf (2024).pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike O'Halloran

Position: UNF



Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association  
P.O. Box 711 ★ Annapolis, MD 21404  
410-693-2226 ★ [www.mapda.com](http://www.mapda.com)

TO: House Environment & Transportation and Economic Matters Committees

FROM: Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association

DATE: February 28, 2024

RE: **HOUSE BILL 735** – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

On behalf of Maryland's convenience stores and energy distributors, MAPDA urges the committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB735.

This legislation would require retailers, such as convenience stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business and pay out the return fee. Additionally, the retailers would be at the forefront of having to charge customers a significant product increase at the cash register.

**Border issues drive up costs and hurt local economies.** A container deposit represents a significant price increase, especially for less expensive products. That value creates unintended consequences that include fraudulent redemption of containers and loss of business.

**Our locations are not made for a deposit scheme.** Although there is an exemption for smaller locations it is not reflective of the layout and size of the emerging convenience store market, as the neighborhood convenience store has evolved into the local grocery store providing a host of products from fresh fruits, eggs, and a variety of beverage offerings. The requirement for dedicated space of dirty and used beverage containers, the evaluation of valid container returns, and the responsibility to payout money on products likely not purchased in the store makes this legislation unworkable and unsustainable in a small business environment.

**There is an easier way to recycle.** Recycling systems should focus on all recyclables – be easy, convenient, and equitable for all. The deposit system does not meet any of those important components.

For these reasons, MAPDA respectfully requests an unfavorable committee report on HB735.

**Feeding and fueling the economy through gas, coffee, food, heating oil and propane.**

MAPDA is an association of convenience stores and energy distributors in Maryland, Delaware & the District of Columbia.

# **2024 MBWA HB 735\_Beverge Container Recycling Refun**

Uploaded by: NICK MANIS

Position: UNF



February 28, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Re: **OPPOSE** – **HB 735** – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chairman Korman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Beer Wholesalers Association (MBWA) we are writing in opposition to **HB 735** which requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish a beverage container deposit program.

The MBWA consists of 22 Maryland businesses employing over 1,400 Maryland citizens that are majority owned and operated generational family businesses. Our members are committed to recycling and reducing litter in Maryland. The policy discussions around recycling and solid waste disposal are important ones and are taking place here and around the country. We recognize the importance of the issue and are proud of the steps we have taken to recycle all the material in our warehouse and business and encourage our customers to do the same.

In the 2023 legislative session, SB 222 Environment – Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility of Packaging Materials was passed. MDE just released the RFP for the recycling assessment, and we are interested in reviewing that report prior to determining the next steps for recycling policies.

We appreciate meeting with Delegate Terrasa staff and other advocates prior to the hearing and looking forward to further discussions with all stakeholders to enhance and improve programs that would be effective, convenient, efficient, and financially stable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Manis", written in a cursive style.

Nicholas G. Manis  
Executive Director

CC: John Favazza

# **HB0735\_UNF\_NWRA\_MD Bev. Container Recycling Refund**

Uploaded by: Pam Kasemeyer

Position: UNF

**Maryland-Delaware Solid Waste Association**

a chapter of the

**National  
Waste & Recycling  
Association<sup>SM</sup>**

Collect. Recycle. Innovate.

TO: The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair  
Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
The Honorable Jen Terrasa

FROM: Andrew G. Vetter  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
410-244-7000

DATE: February 28, 2024

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 735 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

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The Maryland Delaware Solid Waste Association (MDSWA), a chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association, is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in the State of Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. MDSWA and its members **oppose** House Bill 735.

House Bill 735 proposes to establish a statewide beverage container recycling refund and litter reduction program. While it is clearly the objective of the sponsor to increase the percentage of beverage containers recycled in the State as well as reduce litter, the unintended negative impacts of such a program on Maryland's existing recycling infrastructure, far outweigh any potential benefit.

A container recycling refund program as proposed in House Bill 735 only addresses certain beverage containers, while curbside recycling programs target a broad array of materials recovery. The containers to which the bill applies reflect a small percentage of the waste stream. In contrast, the traditional recyclables collected in curbside programs (including beverage containers) make up approximately 50% of the overall waste stream. Taking any action that disrupts the existing curbside programs in the State will have a negative effect on the State's overall recycling rate. While states with similar programs often have relatively higher recycling rates for containers, many have poor overall recycling rates. It is critically important to put container recycling rates into context with overall state recycling rates. High container recycling rates do not translate into high overall recycling rates.

Maryland's local jurisdictions have continued to improve and enhance their curbside and other recycling programs. Concurrent with these efforts, has been the development of significant processing capability to manage an increasing percentage of Maryland's waste stream that is being collected to be

recycled. As a result of the investment in recycling infrastructure by both the public and private sector, Maryland has some of the country's highest overall recycling rates.

Instituting a container recycling program will be harmful to local curbside recycling programs. Putting a specific refundable deposit on a beverage container means the establishment of a separate, duplicate recycling system for a small subset of the waste stream. The funds generated in such a system will support the high cost of operating a redemption system for a small portion of the waste stream at the expense of existing programs. There are better ways to spend scarce resources to promote recycling. Rather than negatively affecting the entire recycling infrastructure in order to recycle more beverage containers, it would be better to make the investment in current recycling infrastructure in order to update programs and increase participation.

Single stream recycling has become the standard for both residential and commercial collection for all recyclable materials. Imposing a container redemption program on top of existing programs will divert revenue from some of the highest value materials, such as aluminum, that support local jurisdiction curbside programs. Consequently, existing recycling programs will lose valuable commodities that they use today to offset the cost of providing recycling services. The result will be a weakened local recycling program and increased costs for curbside collection triggered by the need to cover the costs that are no longer offset by the value of beverage container materials.

Furthermore, because Maryland is a relatively small state geographically, it will be nearly impossible to prohibit the influx of containers from surrounding states for redemption, even though those containers will not have been assessed on the front end. Again, the expenditure of scarce resources that could be better used to enhance current recycling infrastructure and/or for market development for the end use of products.

Finally, in 2023, the General Assembly passed ***Senate Bill 222: Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility in Packaging***, which requires a Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment, and it is the industries' opinion that no legislative action should be taken until the Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment is completed. This Needs Assessment will provide a complete picture of Maryland's recycling and waste infrastructure and what actions Maryland needs to take to enhance Maryland's recycling framework and effectiveness. The Maryland Department of the Environment recently issued a request for proposal for the needs assessment and a final report is expected later this year.

The objective of House Bill 735 may be noteworthy, but the method for achieving it will dramatically undermine overall recycling in Maryland and is preemptive, given the State's commitment to comprehensively consider extended producer responsibility. MDSWA urges an unfavorable report.

**HB735\_MRA\_UNF.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Price

Position: UNF



# MARYLAND RETAILERS ALLIANCE

*The Voice of Retailing in Maryland*



**HB735 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction  
Program  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Position:** Unfavorable

**Background:** HB735 would establish a beverage container deposit program in Maryland.

**Comments:** The Maryland Retailers Alliance (MRA) strongly opposes the passage of a beverage container deposit program in Maryland. While we appreciate efforts made by proponents to address concerns expressed by our organization on previous iterations of the bill, we must continue to oppose the proposal due to the overall expected impact that it could have on businesses in Maryland.

We would first request that the Committee wait to pass recycling policies until you have received the information mandated by SB222 Environment - Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility for Packaging Materials in 2023. MRA has repeatedly testified in support of studies and has urged the State to take an informed, wholistic approach to addressing concerns with the waste and recycling streams in Maryland. Knowing that you will be better informed on the needs of our state before the 2025 legislative Session, we would respectfully urge you to avoid passage of policies that could run contrary to the State's needs.

Regarding HB735, our members, particularly those that operate in jurisdictions with bottle deposit laws in place, continue to have concerns about the effect that this proposal would have on their ability to meet the demands of the bill and provide a clean shopping environment for customers. Reverse vending machines (RVMs) may allow retailers to operate as collection sites without devoting an abundance of space inside the store to bottle collections, but stores often need multiple RVMs to meet demands and store designs are not universal; many retailers may not have excess space in an entry vestibule to devote to an entire row of RVMs. HB735 includes language regarding the minimum number of RVMs that would be required at businesses in certain communities, and this could be overly burdensome for businesses that do not have the space to meet those requirements. Additionally, we are unaware of methods to restrict customers from placing uncleaned bottles into an RVM. The crushing method employed by RVMs to ensure that bottles cannot be deposited more than once results in contamination of the machine due to materials that may be left inside of the bottles. Regular cleaning of these machines can be costly and labor-intensive, and dirty machines cause odors and attract pests to the retail space.

MRA has historically expressed concerns about the passage of recycling, packaging, and stewardship policies that hinge on the continued operations of only a few existing operators. This approach results in an industry environment that lacks competition and oversight, forcing businesses to work with an extremely limited list of operators in order to comply with the law. We cannot support policies that would set up programs and industries that depend on the success of “if we build it, they will come”, and we believe it would be unwise for the State to pass legislation based on the repeated testimony of only a few industry companies that promise to change the landscape of recycling in our region.

For these reasons, we would urge an unfavorable report on HB735. Thank you for your consideration.

# **HB0735\_UNF\_MSLBA\_MD Bev. Container Recycling Refun**

Uploaded by: Steve Wise

Position: UNF



**MARYLAND STATE  
LICENSED BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION**

150 E Main Street, Suite 104, Westminster, MD 21157

TO: The Honorable Mark Korman, Chair  
Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
The Honorable Jen Terrasa

FROM: J. Steven Wise  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Andrew G. Vetter  
410-244-7000

DATE: February 28, 2024

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 735 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

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The Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association (MSLBA), which consists of approximately 800 Maryland businesses holding alcoholic beverage licenses (restaurants, bars, taverns, and package stores), **opposes** House Bill 735.

This legislation would require retailers, such as package stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business, either by establishing a “dedicated area” to store the returned containers or acquiring a reverse vending machine. In addition, they must pay the person redeeming the container in cash in some cases.

The package stores owned by our members are typically 3,000 to 5,000 square feet in size. The majority of this square footage is dedicated to shelving, sales and consumer transactions, coolers, walk-in boxes, and storage area for product that has yet to be put on the shelf. House Bill 735 would require each retailer to set aside either dedicated storage space or an area for a reverse vending machine. These stores are simply not equipped to accommodate storage of redeemable containers, and the space needed to do so would be substantial, considering that a retailer must accept any containers that are brought in, unless they are rejected due to their condition.

Furthermore, Chapter 465 of 2023 requires that the Maryland Department of the Environment conduct a recycling needs assessment before July of 2024. It would seem prudent to allow that study to be completed before the General Assembly enacts legislation implementing a beverage container recycling plan.

For these reasons, MSLBA respectfully requests that the Committee give this legislation an unfavorable report.

**HB0735.pdf**

Uploaded by: Suzanne Price

Position: UNF

HB0735 will drain all citizens who pay taxes on the scam of recycling to fund WOKE agenda and lining the pockets of Nonprofits and PPP's (Public Private Partnerships) which support anti-American interests. SAY NO TO THIS bad idea and bad bill.

Suzanne Price  
AACo, MD

**MRN24HB735.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chaz Miller

Position: INFO



February 26, 2024

**To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee**

**Re: HB 735, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

The Maryland Recycling Network promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's"), to ensure that the use of virgin materials is minimized, materials otherwise destined for disposal are reused or recycled and strong demand exists for buying products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

Our members are county and municipal government recycling managers, private sector recyclers, non-profit recyclers and citizens who support recycling. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

We believe no legislative action should be taken on a Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program until the Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment required by SB 222, "Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility in Packaging", is completed. This Needs Assessment will provide a complete picture of Maryland's recycling and waste infrastructure. Its results will tell us what problems we need to resolve to have recycling legislation that meets Maryland's needs. The RFP for that assessment has been issued. A final report is required later this year. In addition, Maryland recently announced the membership of the EPR Advisory Council, which was also authorized by SB 222.

The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email [phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org](mailto:phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org), phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

We thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Houstle".

Peter Houstle  
Executive Director



# **HB 735 Deposits - comments.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jenna Sublett

Position: INFO



To: House Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Economic Matters Committee

From: Tiffany Harvey  
Jenna Sublett

Date: February 28, 2024

Re: HB 735 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program  
Challenges with this Legislation

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on HB 735. We do not support this legislation.

Our companies believe that to be effective, a collection system for recyclables needs to be convenient to consumers, efficient, financially stable, and help companies gain increased access to recycled material so it can be remade into new products. This legislation does not meet these pillars of a good recycling policy.

The policy conversation around recycling, plastic reduction and solid waste disposal is an important one and one taking place around the country. Our industry recognizes the seriousness of this issue and we welcome the opportunity to work with communities on ideas that get back more of our plastic bottles so they can be remade into new bottles.

In 2019 our industry made local and national news when announcing our 'Every Bottle Back' Initiative, which is investing in recycling infrastructure and community education nationally to improve the collection and remaking of recyclables.

Last year the MD Assembly passed [SB 222](#) *Environment – Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility for Packaging Materials*. Two weeks ago, MDE released the RFP for the recycling needs assessment. We look forward to the needs assessment report. This report will be key in determining the next best step for recycling policies that have measurable outcomes and are equitable for all.

In closing, you have our commitment to be at the table and to participate in best practice discussions or a new direction conversation – particularly when talking about our packaging.

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410-990-9502



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