



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SPONSOR TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB639**  
**(Sports Venues - Reusable Beverage Containers - Use During Sporting Events)**

Delegate Sheila Ruth  
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During the last few years under Governor Moore's administration, Maryland has made significant strides in becoming a greener society and a cleaner state. With a variety of cleanup initiatives, Marylanders have picked up tens of thousands of individual pieces of trash, with the most prevalent litter being single-use, [plastic beverage bottles](#). Litter like this can have wide reaching impacts beyond just being an eyesore, but posing a threat to the health of humans, animals, the environment, and economy. Even when these plastics are properly disposed of, landfills and waste incineration/disposal remain prohibitively expensive and are even dangerous, causing air pollution and serious health concerns that disproportionately affect people of color.

According to the [New York Times](#), while waste and emissions produced from sporting events still pale in comparison to the mining, transportation, and construction industries, it still represents an opportunity for Maryland to work towards its emissions reduction targets under the [Climate Solutions Now Act](#). The state of Maryland [contains 36](#) professional and collegiate athletics facilities, and by allowing reusable beverage containers within the grounds, it will profoundly cut back on the waste created at these facilities. For example, some Orioles games at Camden Yards can take up to [six-and-a-half hours](#) to clean up after, much of it from single-use plastics. Given that they have a stadium policy that allows attendees to bring in their own food within certain size limits, it makes sense to also cut back one waste and extend this policy towards reusable beverage containers.

Reusable bottles are becoming [increasingly popular](#), with over \$2 billion worth sold in the United States in 2022, up from \$1.5 billion in 2020. Such a figure represents a massive opportunity for Maryland to reduce its trash output during sports games, where tens of thousands of people produce thousands of pounds of trash, sometimes daily in sports like baseball. HB0639 would ensure this, requiring owners and operators of sports venues to allow attendees to bring and use reusable beverage containers at sporting events, provided they are empty and within a 24 ounce size limit.

Maryland would not be alone in instituting such a policy. In 2024, legislation introduced by Council Member Shaun Abreu in [New York City](#), home to some of the largest and most well-attended facilities in the country like Yankee Stadium and Madison Square Garden, went into effect that required stadiums to allow attendees to bring their own reusable bottles into games with a 24 ounce size limit despite several venues allowing for this already - legislation that inspired HB0639. Despite concerns regarding security raised by New York City arena representatives, there have been no occurrences of fans using bottles as weapons or throwing them on the court.

There have been additional, similar policies throughout the country as well. Seattle's [Climate Pledge Arena](#), built in 1962 but renovated in 2021 with environmental consciousness in mind, allows for fans to bring their own bottles, provided they are empty. Even in Maryland, [Salisbury University](#) allows for attendees to bring their own reusable containers, as long as they are empty. In DC, their CareFirst Arena, home of the WNBA's Washington Mystics, [allows](#) for attendees to bring in a reusable beverage container for usage at bottle refill stations around the arena

It is time for Maryland to not only allow fans the freedom to bring their own bottles into these venues, but also for the state to seize upon the opportunity to significantly cut back on waste and protect our environment.

I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB0639.