



Committee: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB0639 Sports Venues – Reusable Beverage Containers – Use During Sporting Events

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 2/12/2025 (Economic Matters)

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is a statewide evidence-based organization of over 900 physicians and other health professionals and supporters that addresses existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis, and the issues of pollution and toxic effects on health, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial and social justice.

CPSR strongly supports [HB0639](#), a bill mandating Maryland professional and college sports venues to allow patrons to bring aluminum or stainless steel reusable water bottles. Currently, most venues ban patrons from bringing their own reusable container, thus forcing patrons to use plastic cups or buy plastic water bottles if they are thirsty. Unfortunately, these single-use plastic cups and bottles bring significant environmental and public health harms, with resultant economic costs, as described below.

Plastic cups and bottles are made from fossil fuels and their production contributes to climate change. Due to exponential growth of plastics production, much of it in single-use plastics, the plastics industry accounts for a rising share of global carbon emissions (from 3.7% in 2015 to 5.3% in 2019).¹⁻³ If the plastics industry were a country, it would be the fifth most polluting country in the world. Most of the carbon emissions emerge from fossil fuel extraction and processing as well as from the production of the plastics building blocks (the hydrocarbon monomers and chemical additives).² The estimated global social cost of carbon (a measuring incorporating the net impact of heat-related mortality, impacts on agriculture, and damages from sea-level risk) due to plastics-related carbon emissions is \$341 billion.⁴ Decreasing unnecessary plastic production is an effective strategy for mitigating these climate costs.³ This proposed bill will do that by allowing Marylanders to bring their own beverage container.

Moreover, we know that plastic cups and bottles carry their own health risks. Plastic beverage containers release microplastics and chemicals into the drink, which people then consume. Moreover, most plastic bottles in Maryland end up in trash or as litter, where they fragment into microplastics and leach chemicals into the environment. Once in the environment, they end up in our bodies through the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink.⁴ Studies have detected microplastics in most human organs tested, including the brain, heart, lungs, intestines, testicles, and placenta.⁴⁻⁶ Research shows that microplastics have negative health impacts. These

health impacts emerge from the two components of plastics: the polymer building blocks, which come from fossil fuels, and the chemical additives.^{4,7} Recent animal studies show that microplastic polymers cause inflammation in every tissue they end up in, disrupt the microbiome in the gut, and cause abnormal protein folding in the brain consistent with dementia.^{4,7-9} Decades of animal and human studies have identified plastics-related chemicals as endocrine-disruptors, implicating them in obesity, type 2 diabetes, preterm birth, decreased sperm count, early puberty in females, and neurodevelopmental conditions like ADHD, autism, and IQ loss.^{4,7,10-12} Additionally, this past year, leading cancer researchers named microplastics and related chemicals as drivers of rising cancers in adults.¹³ Health economists estimate the economic burden of health issues from plastics to be substantial, costing \$920.6 billion dollars in healthcare costs, disability, and premature death from just three plastics-related chemicals.⁴

Any bill that helps reduce the environmental burden of plastics is a net win for health of our Marylanders. We therefore urge you to vote in favor of HB0639.

Sincerely,
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

References:

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