



P.O. Box 278
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Committee: Economic Matters Committee

Testimony on: HB 639, Sports Venues – Reusable Beverage Containers – Use During Sporting Events

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 5, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 639, a bill that would require sports venues to allow those attending sporting events to bring and use a reusable beverage containers made primarily of aluminum or stainless steel. The owner or operator of the sports venue may require them to be empty on entering the sports venue.

This bill would reduce single-use plastic waste at sporting events by reducing the use of single-use plastic water bottles, brought from home or purchased at the sports venue. Plastic water bottles are made from fossil fuels; greenhouse gases are emitted at every stage of their life cycle, from extraction of natural gas, through plastic production, and disposal. When littered or disposed, they contribute to plastic pollution in the environment and proliferation of tiny plastic particles ingested by wildlife and people, with potential impacts on human health.

A review of the online policies of 34 sports venues in Maryland found only one venue that explicitly allows fans to bring a reusable water bottle. The rest of the venues prohibited different types of containers (e.g., cans, bottles, thermoses) or beverages from outside (e.g., alcohol, soda, sports drinks), leaving considerable ambiguity about whether empty reusable water bottles are permitted. HB 639 will remove that ambiguity, allowing fans to bring water in a reusable bottle or to bring an empty reusable bottle that can be filled at the sports venue. New York City has passed a similar bill that is already in effect.

In addressing the plastic pollution crisis, it makes sense to start with reducing the need for single-use plastic water bottles for which there is already an excellent alternative – reusable water bottles that can be filled at home, at public water fountains, or at water bottle refill stations.

We respectfully request a favorable report on HB 639.

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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.