

Testimony in Support of HB0639
Sports Venues – Reusable Beverage Containers – Use During Sporting Events
House Economic Matters Committee 5 February 2025
Submitted on 3 February 2025 by 8:10 am

To the Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Janet Ruhl. I live in Galena, MD, on the Sassafras River, and I urge a **favorable** report on HB0639. Thank you in advance for your consideration of support.

This bill requires professional and college sports venues to allow patrons to bring in aluminum or stainless steel reusable water bottles into the venues, avoiding the need to buy beverages in single-use plastic bottles.

Plastics pollute the environment throughout their lifecycle, leaching toxic chemicals and breaking down into micro- and nano-plastics, which can now be found everywhere on earth. Only 9% of plastics are recycled, but even recycling has an environmental impact. We must do more to reduce unnecessary plastics from being produced, used and discarded.

This Bill will:

- Allow Maryland consumers to use refillable beverage bottles in sports venues reducing the production of single-use beverage bottles.
- Allow Maryland consumers to reduce spending on single-use beverage bottles.

This Bill works alone but has even more impact when considered with other bills proposed in the Maryland Senate and House to provide mechanisms for reducing plastic bottle manufacturing and waste. The additional proposals - the Water Bottle Filling Stations Requirement (HB0277/SB0096), the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (SB0346/ HB0232), and the Post-consumer Plastic Recycled Content Program (HB0069) - will:

- Allow Maryland consumers to use refillable beverage bottles not only at sports events but also on a daily basis in buildings with water bottle filling stations.
- Provide Maryland consumers with incentives to return single-use plastic bottles instead of discarding the bottles in landfills or as roadside litter.
- Create reliable markets for post-consumer plastic.
- Reduce production of virgin plastic.

I **support** Bill HB0639 requiring sports venues to allow the use of reusable beverage bottles for multiple reasons. I lead and have led roadside and river trash removal efforts for decades. One of the main trash items is plastic beverage bottles. In addition, I use refillable beverage bottles but, in many situations, personal reusable beverage bottles are not allowed and I must purchase beverages in wasteful single-use bottles.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give HB0639 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,
Janet C. Ruhl