

# **MRN2025 HB 639 Written.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chaz Miller

Position: FAV



**February 12, 2025**

**To: Maryland House Economic Matters Committee**  
**Re: HB 639 Sports Venues - Reusable Beverage Containers - Use During Sporting Events**  
**Support**

Maryland Recycling Network 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 support HB 639 and thank Delegate for introducing it

Reuse is the best way to manage many of the products we use on a daily basis. Refillable water containers are an excellent example of successful reuse. HB639 requires private and public sports venue operators to allow their patrons to bring into their venues empty aluminum or stainless steel refillable water containers. This is waste reduction legislation at its best.

In testimony before the NYC Council, Allen Hershkowitz, Environmental Advisor to the National Basketball Association, Major League Soccer, the New York Yankees, the LA Clippers and Chair of Sport and Sustainability International, a global sport and sustainability non-profit, noted that allowing the use of non-glass refillable containers at sports venues is a growing trend throughout the world. He stressed the benefits of allowing fans to rehydrate conveniently and quickly from venue water fountains, especially given the increasingly hot weather at outdoor summer athletic events. We all know it can get warm in Maryland in July and August in particular.

HB 639 is a win for Maryland's environment! We urge speedy passage of this bill. Summer is coming.

The Maryland Recycling Network is a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in recycling and waste reduction. Please do not hesitate to contact us 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 our comments.

Sincerely,

Chaz Miller  
Chair, MRN Legislative Committee

**Maryland Recycling Network**  
[www.marylandrecyclingnetwork.org](http://www.marylandrecyclingnetwork.org) \* (443) 741-8740

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# **Stadium PSR.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Ryznar

Position: FAV



**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).<sup>1-3</sup> 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).<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Decreasing unnecessary plastic production is an effective strategy for mitigating these climate costs.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Studies have detected microplastics in most human organs tested, including the brain, heart, lungs, intestines, testicles, and placenta.<sup>4-6</sup> 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.<sup>4,7</sup> 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.<sup>4,7-9</sup> 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.<sup>4,7,10-12</sup> Additionally, this past year, leading cancer researchers named microplastics and related chemicals as drivers of rising cancers in adults.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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:*

1. OECD. *Global Plastics Outlook: Policy Scenarios to 2060*. OECD Publishing; 2022.
2. Karali N, Khanna N, Shah N. Climate impact of primary plastic production. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Publications. 2024 Available at: <https://www.osti.gov/biblio/2336721>.
3. Zheng J and Suh S. Strategies to reduce the global carbon footprint of plastics. *Nature Climate Change* 2019; 9: 374-378.
4. Landrigan PJ, Raps H, Cropper M, *et al*. The Minderoo-Monaco commission on plastics and human health. *Annals of Global Health* 2023; 89(1): 23, 1–215.
5. Amato-Lourenço LF, Dantas KC, Júnior GB, *et al*. Microplastics in the olfactory bulb of the human brain. *JAMA Network Open* 2024; 7(9): e2440018.
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7. Ryznar E, Haase E, Lauterbach M. The plastics crisis: a neuropsychiatric problem hidden in plain sight. *Psychiatric Times* 2024; 41(9): 13-16.
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**JCR\_HB0639\_03Feb2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Janet Ruhl

Position: FAV



**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.

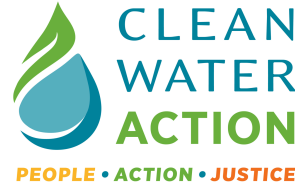
Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give HB0639 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,  
Janet C. Ruhl

# **Sign-On TrashFreeMD HB639 Sports Venues - Reusable**

Uploaded by: Kelly Doordan

Position: FAV



## HB 639 Sports Venues - Reusable Beverage Containers - Use During Sporting Events

**Date:** February 12, 2025

**Position:** Support

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee:

HB 639 would require owners of sports venues to allow individuals to bring and use a reusable beverage container to the venue during a professional or collegiate sporting event.

We enthusiastically support the goal of reducing plastic waste and making it easier for Marylanders to use reusable water bottles. HB639 furthers our work toward this goal by encouraging the transition from single-use plastics to reusable and durable alternatives while on the go.

According to the OECD, global **production of plastic is projected to triple by 2060**. One of the key drivers of the increase is packaging – including single use plastic bottles. HB 639 increases opportunities and options for Marylanders to reduce plastic pollution and make sustainable choices in more venues, potentially eliminating thousands of plastic bottles from consumption and disposal each year.

Marylanders already carry reusable water bottles to the many places in which they work, learn, travel, and recreate. Let's make carrying reusables the norm. HB 639 supports this transition from single-use plastic consumption, and we urge a favorable report.

We commend and thank Delegate Ruth and co-sponsors for initiating this proposal.

Contact: Kelly Doordan ([kelly@trashfreemaryland.org](mailto:kelly@trashfreemaryland.org)), Executive Director, Trash Free Maryland

Trash Free Maryland

Blue Water Baltimore

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

National Aquarium

Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Clean Water Action

# **HB639-MDSierraClub\_fav\_5Feb2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV

**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.

Martha Ainsworth, Chair  
Chapter Zero Waste Team  
[Martha.Ainsworth@mdsierra.org](mailto:Martha.Ainsworth@mdsierra.org)

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
[Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org](mailto:Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org)

# **HB639 - Ruth - Sponsor Testimony - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: S Ruth

Position: FAV



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  
February 6, 2025

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 on 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.