

Justin Heckelman  
Riverdale, MD 20737  
February 11, 2025

Re: Favorable position on HB0232 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Committee Members,

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter to all Marylanders. I am writing to ask that the committee provide a favorable report on HB0232, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program and support its passage in the House and General Assembly.

HB0232 would help reduce significant amounts of single use bottles that are littered in Maryland each day and increase recycling rates, which have been trended down throughout the country for decades. I have participated in many formal trash cleanups with groups throughout my area in District 22 and bottles are typically the most frequently collected item. Outside of the cleanups that I have participated in, I regularly see and pick up many of the bottles that litter our roadways and trails in the area, especially along the Northeast Branch Anacostia River that is near my house.

Without being recycled or otherwise properly disposed of, these bottles take hundreds to thousands of years to break down in the environment. During that time, they break down into microplastics and nanoplastics that pose a danger to animal and human health. These plastics eventually make it into the food web and eventually become ingested by humans.

A small deposit provides the financial incentive to increase the recycling rates of our single use bottles and remove them from the waste stream. This deposit model has been successfully employed in many other countries and states. The ten states that currently have bottle deposit rates much higher than Maryland. The states with bottle deposits have about a 70% recycling rate compared to only 33% nationwide.

This bill would also help the state support its climate initiatives in reducing the need for virgin materials in the manufacturing process, while reducing the need for landfilling or incinerating the bottles that are thrown away. Both of those two methods of disposing of trash are expensive and onerous for the state. By reducing the number of bottles thrown away, the state will improve local water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce energy use.

I emphatically support HB0232 and ask that the committee return a favorable report and support its passage in the House and General Assembly.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter and please reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Justin Heckelman