



**February 14, 2025**

**HB232**

**Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program  
Economic Matters Committee  
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 232**. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 232 would create The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program which will seek to enhance recycling efforts by establishing a system where consumers can return beverage containers for a refund. The program aims to reduce litter, pollution, and associated cleanup costs. Producers will be required to register with the Department of the Environment, pay a fee, and participate in a stewardship organization to sell or distribute redeemable beverage containers in the state.

Pope Francis, in his encyclical "Laudato Si'," calls upon all people of goodwill to recognize the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and economic concerns and to work together towards the common good. This program reflects a commitment to the care of God's creation. By reducing pollution and promoting responsible use of resources, the legislation aligns with the moral duty to safeguard the environment for future generations. Supporting initiatives like this reflects the principle of stewardship, which calls us to protect and nurture the earth as a gift from God, and the common good, which seeks to ensure a healthy and clean environment for all members of society.

This program promotes environmental stewardship by reducing waste and pollution caused by beverage containers. By encouraging recycling, the program decreases litter in public spaces and lowers cleanup expenses for local governments. It also fosters a circular economy by creating opportunities for job growth in recycling industries and increasing community engagement in sustainability efforts.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 232**.