

Testimony in Support of HB0232/SB0346
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
House Environment and Transportation Committee 14 February 2025
Submitted on 12 February 2025 by 8:30 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 HB0232/SB0346. Thank you in advance for your consideration of support.

Single-use glass, plastic and metal beverage containers are often discarded as unsightly litter, buried in landfills or incinerated as garbage. These practices result in negative climate and health impacts at every stage – production of virgin materials, leaching toxic chemicals and breaking down into micro- and nano-plastics, extraction of fossil fuels, emission of greenhouse gases during degradation/incineration. The materials can be recycled, made into new containers, reducing the need for virgin materials. We must do more to reduce virgin glass, plastic and metal from being produced, used and discarded.

This bill requires that a small deposit is added to the price of beverages in glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers (10¢-15¢). The deposit is refunded when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling. The program is implemented and financed by beverage producers, w/ enforceable targets and strong oversight from MDE.

This Bill will:

- Provide Maryland consumers with incentives to return single-use glass, plastic and metal beverage containers instead of discarding these products in landfills or as roadside litter.
- Drive the market toward collecting, reusing and/or recycling glass, plastic and metal beverage containers.
- Reduce production of virgin glass, plastic and metal.

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 Bill Allowing Reusable Beverage Containers in Sports Venues (HB0639), and the Post-consumer Plastic Recycled Content Program (HB0069) - will:

- Allow Maryland consumers to use refillable beverage bottles not only on a daily basis in buildings with water bottle filling stations but also at sports events.
- Allow Maryland consumers to reduce spending on single-use water bottles.
- Create reliable markets for post-consumer plastic.

I **support** Bill HB0232/SB0346 requiring Deposits on Beverage Containers for multiple reasons. I lead and have led roadside and river trash removal efforts for decades. Amongst the main trash items are bottles and cans, items which should be recycled. Putting a financial incentive into returning bottles and cans to central collection points will not only decrease roadside litter but emphasizes the need to recycle this huge resource.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give HB0232/SB0346 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,
Janet C. Ruhl