

## **Opposition to HB0232: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB0232, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. While the bill aims to address important environmental issues, I believe it presents several challenges that outweigh its potential benefits.

1. **Economic Burden on Consumers and Businesses:** The bill mandates that producers register with the Department of the Environment, pay a fee, and be part of a stewardship organization. These additional costs will likely be passed on to consumers, increasing the price of beverages. Small businesses, in particular, may struggle to absorb these costs, potentially leading to reduced competitiveness and job losses.
2. **Administrative Complexity:** The implementation of the program requires significant administrative oversight, including the establishment of a separate account within the State Recycling Trust Fund and the creation of a beverage container stewardship organization. This complexity may lead to inefficiencies and increased government spending, diverting resources from other critical environmental initiatives.
3. **Limited Impact on Litter Reduction:** While the bill aims to reduce litter, it may not effectively address the root causes of littering behavior. Public education and community engagement programs may be more effective in changing behavior and reducing litter in the long term.
4. **Potential for Fraud and Abuse:** The redemption framework outlined in the bill could be susceptible to fraud and abuse, with individuals potentially exploiting the system for financial gain. This could undermine the program's effectiveness and lead to increased costs for the state.
5. **Alternative Solutions:** There are alternative approaches to achieving the bill's goals that may be more effective and less burdensome. For example, expanding existing recycling programs, increasing public awareness campaigns, and incentivizing the use of reusable containers could achieve similar outcomes without the drawbacks associated with HB0232.

In conclusion, while the goals of HB0232 are commendable, the bill's potential economic burden, administrative complexity, limited impact on litter reduction, and potential for fraud and abuse make it an impractical solution. I urge the Maryland General Assembly to consider alternative approaches that can achieve the desired environmental outcomes more effectively and efficiently.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Burton