



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Liz Walsh
Council Chair

District 1

February 11, 2025

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 232
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chairwoman Boyce and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 232, which seeks to reduce litter by instituting a recycling refund program for beverage containers. This program could significantly increase the percentage of beverage containers that are successfully recycled in our State – a number that as of 2019 is a dismal twenty-three percent compared with nearly sixty to ninety-one percent for states with initiatives similar to HB 232's proposal.

According to a 2023 Howard County study, an estimated 8,340 tons of beverage containers are collected through our curbside program. We anticipate that the Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program would reduce the volume that our waste management facilities need to process, thereby saving taxpayer money. We appreciate the provision that allows for unclaimed deposits to be added to a fund that may be used for grants to municipalities to improve waste management programs.

According to the Container Recycling Institute, about seventy-five percent of over five million beverage bottles sold annually in Maryland end up in landfills, waterways, roadsides, or are incinerated. The refund could be an added incentive to recycle bottles, thereby improving the health of our soil, green spaces, shared public spaces, and waterways by reducing litter.

Therefore, I urge you to move this legislation forward with a favorable recommendation. Thank you for considering my testimony.

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Liz Walsh", is written over a horizontal line.

Liz Walsh, Chair, Howard County Council