



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB0342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB0342. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of 32 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB0342.

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction, aka “MD bottle bill,” is a very sensible bill. It is an easy, straight forward solution to reduce plastic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the energy needed to produce new beverage containers. The bill includes beverages containers that are bottles, cans, or other containers, but excludes a carton, pouch or aseptic packaging.

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. This bill would create a beverage container program in Maryland with a refundable deposit, depending on the size of the container. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the bottle is returned and is estimated to achieve a 90% return rate - up from a 25% rate today. The performance targets for the program are: 1) a 70% beverage container redemption rate by December 31, 2030; 2) a 90% redemption rate by December 31, 2033; 3) by December 31, 2028, attainment of all convenience standards identified by the MD Department of the Environment; and 4) by December 31, 2038, at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in the state are returned and refilled.

This program would be self-funded from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. While the state and counties are grappling with extremely tight budgets, the program established by the bill would not cost the state at all and would relieve counties and ultimately the taxpayers from the burden of expensive waste and recycling costs.

The bill would provide a high rate of return for containers by creating incentives for the development of refillable and reusable containers. It isn't cost effective to produce reusable containers if they are not being returned as part of a circular and zero waste economy. We also note recycling refund programs for beverage containers can go hand in hand with legislation to adopt producer responsibility for packaging. Well-designed producer responsibility programs can help us *reduce* our volume of waste, while modern recycling refund programs help us *reuse* and

recycle a major portion of the packaging waste stream. Recycling refund programs help capture highly recyclable beverage containers that might otherwise be wasted or become litter and help satisfy the demand for high quality recycled materials.

The State of Maryland needs to protect our waterways and our beloved Chesapeake Bay from plastic pollution and litter. This bill will accomplish this goal, because beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective solution to recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. Ten states, covering more than 90 million people, have longstanding, successful programs.

The MLC Climate Justice Wing strongly supports SB0342 and urges a FAVORABLE report in Committee.

- 350MoCo
- Adat Shalom Climate Action
- Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry
- Chesapeake Earth Holders
- Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Climate Communications Coalition
- Climate Parents of Prince George's
- Climate Reality Greater Maryland
- ClimateXChange
- Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists
- DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
- Echotopia
- Elders Climate Action Maryland
- Fix Maryland Rail
- Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
- Greenbelt Climate Action Network
- HoCoClimateAction
- Howard County Indivisible
- Maryland Legislative Coalition
- Maryland Energy Advocates
- Maryland Third Act
- Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund
- Mobilize Frederick
- Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
- Montgomery Countryside Alliance
- Mountain Maryland Movement
- Nuclear Information & Resource Service
- Progressive Maryland
- Safe & Healthy Playing Fields
- Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
- The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter
- Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland