



**Plastic Free QAC**  
735 Oyster Cove Drive  
Grasonville, MD 21638

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 342**  
**Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act**  
**February 10, 2026**

Sen. Brian Feldman, Chair,  
Sen. Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair,  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members:

My name is Bente Cooney, Founder and President of Plastic Free QAC (PFQAC), a non-profit grassroots organization based in Queen Anne's County, committed to reducing single-use plastic. I would like the record to show that Plastic Free QAC **strongly supports** SB 342, which incentivizes bottle recycling to dramatically reduce littering.

PFQAC conducts monthly roadside clean-ups. Bottles are **the** single most common litter along the roads.

If we paid a 10-cent deposit on each of our beverages, as the bottle bill requires, the litter problem would be almost totally eliminated, because we would get our 10-cent back by depositing the bottles in a reverse vending machine at the grocery store. Ten states currently have bottle bill legislation. The effectiveness is abundantly clear, as states like Michigan and Oregon have achieved recycling rates of close to 90%.

Plastic Free QAC is a registered 501c3 Non-Profit based in Grasonville, MD 21638

My husband and I sailed the seas for many years before we settled in Grasonville, and we always hated to see bottles floating on the surface of the ocean. The potential danger they cause to sea life is well documented. We love living by the Bay, but sadly we encounter even more bottles as they wash in from the Chesapeake Bay, especially during storms. (See photo below)

We must reduce plastic litter in our oceans and our lands. Scientists are currently discovering that microplastics cause harm to our bodies. These tiny particles get into the fish we eat, and into the farmers' soil that grow our food. We humans consume an estimated credit card worth of plastic every week. Sadly, it is causing havoc with our bodies, as the documentary "We are all Plastic People Now" so vividly illustrates. (We recommend you take time to watch it!)

The fact that local governments can save money and that the program is budget neutral, should also be a strong incentive to make this program a reality for Maryland.

Plastic Free QAC urges you to vote SB 342 favorably out of Committee.  
Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Bente Cooney,  
Founder and President  
Plastic Free QAC  
Grasonville, MD  
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*After a storm at Oyster Cove,  
Grasonville by Marshy Creek,  
Chesapeake*



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