



## **SB342– Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

**Testimony before Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 10, 2026**

**Position: Favorable**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 1500+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB342**, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. The bill establishes a program to collect a small deposit for each beverage bottle purchased that will be refunded when the container is returned. The program will be self-financing, creating no new costs for the taxpayers. The deposits will be returned to the consumer, meaning it is not a new 'tax' on consumers.

Approximately 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, and three-quarters of them end up as litter, are incinerated, or are landfilled. Many of them are plastic. Burning them causes air pollution. Landfilling them causes soil and water pollution for decades. Containers that are left in the wild as litter are extremely problematic. Such containers, especially plastic ones, are harmful to the environment, wildlife, and people. There is extensive research that demonstrates that plastic breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces that are ending up in human bodies, and both the plastic pieces and the chemicals plastics are made from are doing known and unknown damage to the human body.

This legislation will increase the source of clean recycled materials for use in new bottles, setting up the possibility of a closed loop production system. And the program will work hand in hand with Maryland's Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Law.

Ten states in the U.S have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs, and Maryland's bill is designed to improve those existing laws because the states were consulted about what improvements they would make given their experience. States with a 10¢ deposit have a 90% recycling rate. It would be fantastic if Maryland could say the same.

I live in a neighborhood of houses, townhomes, and garden apartments. The view from my home includes a short creek that leads to the Middle Patuxent River and, eventually, to the Chesapeake Bay. Litter washes down this creek, including many beverage containers. This bill would give the neighbors an incentive to keep the bottles out of the creek, keeping Maryland's waterways and neighborhoods cleaner.

For all of these reasons, we urge you to pass the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. It is long-overdue. Let's make Maryland an environmental leader. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.**

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