



February 10, 2026

Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction

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

The Ocean City and Annapolis Chapters of the Surfrider Foundation, along with our multiple student Clubs in Maryland, all strongly support SB342, the *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*, commonly referred to as the "bottle bill". Our organization has hosted lots of coastal and inland litter cleanups over the years, and bottles are always one of the top items found.

The Surfrider Foundation (Surfrider) is a grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches for all people. We submit these comments on behalf of our 80+ chapters, 130+ youth clubs, and more than 500,000 supporters, activists, and members in the United States, including our local Maryland Chapters and Clubs.

Maryland residents are increasingly frustrated with beverage container litter and illegal dumping polluting our neighborhoods and waterways. Littered plastic bottles are part of the plastic pollution crisis; plastic particles have been found in drinking water, food, human bodies, and in practically every inch of the globe. This pollution poses significant health risks to humans, especially those in underserved communities where the majority of plastic manufacturing and waste management infrastructure is located.

Bottle bills are a proven way to drastically increase the rate of recycling for beverage containers, reducing the need to manufacture virgin bottles and lessening the amount incinerated, landfilled, or littered. Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit.

Around 25% of beverage containers are recycled in Maryland. The rest are buried in landfills, burned in incinerators, or dumped in our parks, neighborhoods and waterways, contributing to air and water pollution.

How a bottle bill works: Customers pay a small deposit when they purchase beverage containers, which is then refunded to them when they return the container to a retailer or redemption facility. The program is self-financing, saving costs to taxpayers and local governments. A share of the unclaimed deposits can fund grant programs for development of refill/reuse bottle systems.

Bill SB342 offers protections for small businesses, many of which are exempt from requirements to take back and store bottles and cans. Bottle bills create jobs as it takes more human power to recycle than to incinerate or landfill.

Bottle bills are proven policies to reduce litter, reduce our exposure to microplastics, increase recycling rates, increase jobs, and increase the use of recycled materials. Please support this bill.

Matt Gove
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Surfrider Foundation