



February 5, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Room 2 W. Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **OPPOSE** - **SB 342**– Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Beer Wholesalers Association (MBWA) we are writing in opposition to **SB 342** which requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish a beverage container deposit program.

The MBWA consists of 22 Maryland businesses employing over 1,400 Maryland citizens that are majority owned and operated generational family businesses. Our members are committed to recycling and reducing litter in Maryland. The policy discussions around recycling and solid waste disposal are important ones and are taking place here and around the country. We recognize the importance of the issue and are proud of the steps we have taken to recycle all the material in our warehouse and business and encourage our customers to do the same.

There is a better way to recycle and reduce litter than implementing a program that costs consumers more at the cash register, historically is plagued with fraud, and most notably, imposes significant operational changes and costs to MBWA members and our retail customers. The bill sets redemption targets to eventually reach 90% higher than current rates across all existing programs, even though those programs average a 69% redemption rate. At the same time, an increase in refund values by \$0.05 is proposed if the Department determines that for two consecutive years redemption rates have not reached 90%. Setting an unrealistic goal of a 90% redemption rate, which is currently not being achieved anywhere in America, in less than 10 years, and then penalizing producers, wholesalers and retailers with additional costs is misguided and punitive.

Evan Athanas

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Last year Maryland Legislature passed SB 901 - Environment - Packaging and Paper Products - Producer Responsibility Plans (EPR) which is one of the most comprehensive EPR laws in the country. MDE is currently in the process of promulgating the regulations for EPR. The first comment period just opened and runs through March of this year. Based on information and the timeline shared by MDE, adoption of the regulations necessary for EPR will run up against the Program start date of July 1, 2028.

MBWA has been following the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) EPR's Advisory Council meetings and strongly encourages the Legislature to fully implement EPR and it be operational prior to passing additional programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Manis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nicholas G. Manis
Executive Director

CC: John Favazza