

SB342 - Bottle Bill Testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV



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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

SB342: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (Maryland Bottle Bill)

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 10, 2026

SUPPORT

Background: Senate Bill 342 would establish a program that would add a small refundable deposit (10 cents) to the price of beverages in glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers. The deposit is then refunded when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling.

The program would be implemented and financed by beverage producers, with strong oversight by MDE and enforceable targets (90% redemption rate). No implementation of enforcement responsibility by local government, so there is no burden on our local communities. Similar programs have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades, expanding worldwide to fight plastic pollution and litter.

Written Comments: The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* means to repair the world in which we live. As the advocacy arm of The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, we represent organizations that work to educate the community on sustainability and make strides towards repairing the world.

Plastic pollution is harmful to our communities. Maryland's beverage container litter is contributing to pollution in the State's waters, including the Chesapeake Bay, and elsewhere in the environment, threatening marine and other wildlife, and human health. About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold each year in Maryland, but only a quarter of them (1.4 billion) are captured for recycling.

Baltimore has made efforts to try to assist in mitigating the problem by establishing infrastructure like the Mr. Trash Wheel fleet in the harbor to collect waste that makes it into our waterways, but this is not enough. Habits must be broken to prevent more harm.

By reducing litter, we are in turn reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. This brings us closer to achieving the climate goals set for Maryland, and in turn helps to repair our world.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB342.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore Favorable Test

Uploaded by: Adam Lindquist

Position: FAV

February 10, 2026

**SB 342- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund
and Litter Reduction Program**

Position - Favorable

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

Thank you for your time. My name is Adam Lindquist and I am here on behalf of the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore. I submit this testimony in favor of SB 342.

Representing major businesses, developers, and restaurateurs along the Baltimore Waterfront, Waterfront Partnership is a Business Improvement District responsible for maintaining, improving, and protecting Baltimore's Inner Harbor. In 2010 we set a goal, in partnership with the City, to have a swimmable and fishable Baltimore Harbor. To that end, we have supported many restoration efforts including the installation of four trash wheels in the Baltimore Harbor. We have used the data from trash collection to inform legislation and prove the efficacy of policy change to reduce plastic pollution including the statewide foam container ban and plastic bag bans in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We do this because it is good for the environment and because it is good for business.

The Inner Harbor sits at the end of the Jones Falls stream that drains 64 square miles of land in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. When it rains, a tremendous amount of litter comes down the Jones Falls and covers the Harbor. Over the past twelve years, Mr. Trash Wheel and the Trash Wheel family have been the last line of defense to prevent our Harbor from being covered with litter, collecting almost 3 million plastic

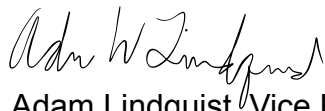
bottles. This is only the tiniest fraction of the 4 billion beverage containers produced in Maryland yearly that end up as trash or litter.

Waterfront Partnership spends millions of dollars each year cleaning the water and land in our district when that money would be better spent on events, landscaping, and attractions that bring people to the Inner Harbor. The same is true for saving taxpayer dollars by reducing municipal costs for litter removal and waste disposal as only 23% of recyclable material ultimately end up being recycled. The rest is burned, buried, or littered with taxpayers footing the bill for unnecessary clean-up costs. This bill would simultaneously save businesses money on disposal costs and increase revenue around the Harbor because a Harbor that is clean and healthy is one that people want to visit.

Container deposit laws have been beneficial in other ways like reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing our reliance on foreign oil and creating new jobs in the recycling sector.

Capturing plastic bottles in our waterways is not a solution, it is an urgent problem and we need this Bottle Bill to create a real solution to reduce beverage container litter.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB 342. Thank you for your time.



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Bottle Bill Events Hosted By Waterfront Partnership (pictured below)

Dumpster Dive

On Saturday, November 15, 2025, Waterfront Partnership hosted a “Dumpster Dive” event in support of the Maryland Bottle Bill. 150 volunteers sorted and counted every beverage collected by Baltimore’s Mr. Trash Wheel in a single dumpster (Baltimore’s Mr. Trash Wheel family collects around 250 dumpsters of floating litter and debris annually).

To date, Baltimore’s Mr. Trash Wheel family has collected 2.7 million beverage containers from just four streams that empty into the Baltimore Harbor.

Media:

- Chesapeake Bay Magazine: Mr. Trash Wheel’s Dumpster Dive Gathers Pollution Data, Evidence For a Bottle Trade-In Program
 - <https://www.chesapeakebaymagazine.com/mr-trash-wheels-dumpster-dive-gathers-pollution-data-evidence-for-a-bottle-trade-in-program/>

Cash For Trash

On Saturday, January 31, 2026, Waterfront Partnership hosted “Cash For Trash: A Bottle Bill Demonstration Event.” The goal of the event was to educate the public and demonstrate how a beverage container program would function in Maryland. The public was able to bring clean and empty containers to Peabody Heights Brewery (a small business supportive of this legislation) and redeem them for ten cents.

Despite freezing temperatures and snow covered roads, 160 people attended the three-hour event and redeemed 25,563 containers.

Media:

- WMAR: Baltimore Group Demonstrates Bottle Bill Benefits with Cash-For-Trash Event:
 - <https://www.wmar2news.com/news/region/baltimore-city/baltimore-group-demonstrates-bottle-bill-benefits-with-cash-for-trash-event>





Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore Favorable Test

Uploaded by: Adam Lindquist

Position: FAV

February 10, 2026

**SB 342- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund
and Litter Reduction Program**

Position - Favorable

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SB 342 - Bottle Deposit - BWB Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Alice Volpitta

Position: FAV



February 6, 2026

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (SB342)

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Blue Water Baltimore is a local nonprofit organization with a mission to protect and restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams, and Harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities. **On behalf of Blue Water Baltimore, I write to express our strong support for SB342.**

Blue Water Baltimore, home of the Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper, is part of the international Waterkeeper Alliance that is composed of over 300 watchdog organizations with a mission to protect and restore waterways all over the world. Our licensed Waterkeeper jurisdiction includes the entirety of the Patapsco and Back River watersheds, which means that Blue Water Baltimore is uniquely positioned among environmental NGOs in the region to focus on the health and prosperity of these waterways, and that of the people who live, work, and recreate around them.

The Patapsco and Back Rivers are two of the most polluted tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay as evidenced from our routine water quality monitoring and assessments from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.¹² Many of the longstanding challenges with water quality and failing water infrastructure in the Baltimore region are rooted in decades of inequitable infrastructure investments and environmental racism. **Polluted streams and rivers are the manifestation of these systemic problems, and the people of Baltimore are being robbed of their inherent right to clean water every day.**

A portion of the tidal Patapsco River, the Baltimore Harbor, is one of the only waterways in the United States listed as "impaired" under the federal Clean Water Act for trash. As such, regulators have established an accompanying Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or "pollution diet" for trash in the Harbor. **This means that trash is so prevalent in the streets and streams around Baltimore that the Harbor itself is not meeting water quality standards and that significant efforts are necessary to stop the damage and heal the Patapsco River.**

Bottle trash, particularly plastic, is a pervasive blight in our waterways, posing a serious threat to the environment and aquatic life. As plastic breaks down into microplastics, nanoplastics, and plasticizer chemicals, it further contaminates the environment, creating long-term ecological damage. This pollution doesn't just affect wildlife - it enters the human food chain through the consumption of contaminated

¹ Baltimore Water Watch. 2026. Blue Water Baltimore. <http://www.BaltimoreWaterWatch.org>.

² 2025 Chesapeake Bay Report Card. University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. <https://ecoreportcard.org/report-cards/chesapeake-bay/bay-health/>

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seafood, and bioaccumulates in our brains at an alarming rate.³ **Enacting a bottle deposit bill is crucial to reducing plastic waste and protecting both our environment and public health.**

In my role as your Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper, my team and I routinely patrol the local streams that flow into the Patapsco and Back Rivers to monitor water quality and seek out chronic sources of pollution. **I have seen first-hand the huge rafts of plastic bottles that get trapped and restrict flow in our storm drains and urban streams, which contribute to flooding during heavy rain events.** Swaths of trash, especially plastic bottles, act as high-water marks along the Gwynns Falls trail where the stream has crested the banks. The visible trash is only a fraction of what makes its way downstream into the Baltimore Harbor, the Patapsco River, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

Plastic, glass, and metal bottle trash is a nuisance in our streets and our streams, but **even when beverage containers are thrown away instead of being littered, their disposal can contribute to the compounding harms that disproportionately impact historically disenfranchised and overburdened communities.** That's because discarded recyclable items typically end up in the trash, not recycling. Along with Carroll, Prince George's, Somerset, and Washington Counties, neither Baltimore County nor Baltimore City achieved their state-mandated recycling rate requirements in 2023, the most recent year for which we have data. Baltimore County's CY2023 recycling rate was only 27.35%, and Baltimore City's CY2023 recycling rate was an abysmal 18.28%.⁴ The remainder of the waste generated in these two counties is buried in landfills or burned in incinerators, which exacerbates the environmental injustices shouldered by lower-income residents living in close proximity to them.

A beverage container deposit program is a common-sense and proven strategy to reduce litter, increase recycling rates, and incentivize environmental stewardship by turning trash into treasure with a fully-refundable deposit on plastic, glass, and metal bottles. Ten states in the US have already paved the way for this type of program in Maryland, and the results are clear; states with bottle deposit programs are achieving up to 90% redemption on bottles and boosting overall recycling rates up to 65%, which is significantly higher than both Maryland's rate and the national average of 32%.⁵

From July 2024 through February 2026, **Blue Water Baltimore collected 781 signatures from Maryland residents who support this legislation** and the creation of a state-wide bottle deposit program. That sign-on letter, and the names of individuals who support the measure, are included as an attachment to this testimony (*Attachment #6*).

³ Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains. Nature Medicine. Nihart et al. February 3, 2025. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03453-1>

⁴ Table 17 - County Recyclables by Commodity in Tons for CY23. Compiled by the Maryland Department of the Environment from Reports Submitted for CY23. Submitted March 13, 2025. <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/Documents/Maryland%20Solid%20Waste%20Management%20and%20Diversion%20Report%202024.pdf>

⁵ The 50 States of Recycling. A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates, pp. 15-17. December 2023. Eunomia Research & Consulting Inc.

⁶ National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Last updated on December 19, 2025. <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>

The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program will result in:

- **Less trash** in our streets, streams, rivers, and Chesapeake Bay.
- Fewer clogged stormdrain inlets, which means **reduced urban flooding** in our communities.
- Fewer plastic, glass, and metal bottles going to the WIN Waste incinerator, which means **cleaner air and less pollution** in our environment.
- **More space** in our landfills.
- **Reduced strain on public waste management** with a system that removes beverage containers from the municipal waste stream.

I am including a handful of pictures from our local waterways to show the prevalence of bottle trash in our streams and rivers (*Attachments #1-5*). While our focus is on streams and rivers around the Baltimore region, bottle trash negatively impacts waterways throughout the state of Maryland. **For all of the reasons outlined above, Blue Water Baltimore urges this committee to issue a favorable report on SB342.**

Sincerely,

Alice Volpitta
Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper
Blue Water Baltimore
avolpitta@bluewaterbaltimore.org

Attachment #1: Picture of bottles and trash accumulated in the Powder Mill Run. (p. 4)

Attachment #2: Picture of bottles and trash accumulated at Masonville Cove. (p. 5)

Attachment #3: Picture of bottles and trash accumulated in East Branch Herbert Run. (p. 6)

Attachment #4: Picture of bottles that have accumulated as a high-water mark at Ferry Bar Park. (p. 7)

Attachment #5: Picture of bottles that have accumulated in the Gwynns Falls stream. (p. 8)

Attachment #6: Sign-on letter and signatures from 781 Maryland constituents. (pp. 9-27)

Attachment #1: Bottles and assorted trash accumulated in the Powder Mill Run. Baltimore County, MD. 3/16/2014.



**Attachment #2: Bottles and assorted trash accumulated at Masonville Cove. Baltimore City, MD.
3/24/2011.**



Attachment #3: Bottles and assorted trash accumulated along the banks of East Branch Herbert Run. Baltimore County, MD. 4/14/2017.



Attachment #4: Bottle trash that has accumulated as a high-water mark at Ferry Bar Park. Baltimore City, MD. 8/28/2015.



Attachment #5: Plastic and metal bottles that have accumulated along the banks of the Gwynns Falls stream. Baltimore, MD. 2/11/2024.



Attachment #6: Sign-on letter and signatures from 781 Maryland constituents who support a Maryland Bottle Bill. Signatures collected at Blue Water Baltimore community engagement events from July 2024 - February 2026.



Dear Maryland Legislators,

We, the undersigned **781 community members of Maryland**, hereby petition for the implementation of a statewide bottle deposit program. This initiative is crucial for the following reasons:

- Plastic pollution and waste management are pressing issues globally and locally. By implementing a bottle deposit program, we can significantly **reduce the amount of plastic and glass waste** ending up in landfills, incinerators and natural environments.
- The recycling industry plays a vital role in the state's economy, providing jobs and economic growth opportunities. A bottle deposit program would **create new employment** in recycling facilities, collection centers, and related sectors.
- A bottle deposit program encourages consumers to adopt recycling habits by providing a financial incentive. It promotes **environmental stewardship** from a young age and fosters a culture of sustainability.
- A bottle deposit program incentivizes proper disposal and reduces littering. **Cleaner streets, parks, and water bodies** contribute to **strong communities**, enhancing community pride and reducing public health risks.
- There is strong public support for bottle deposit programs. Residents recognize the benefits of recycling incentives and are willing to participate. Many neighboring states and jurisdictions have already successfully implemented bottle deposit programs, providing valuable models and frameworks for adaptation and implementation at the state level.

A Beverage container deposit program, or a “bottle bill,” would be a highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter in our waterways, incinerators, and community spaces.

Sincerely,

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SB342 Testimony - Andrew Hinz.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Hinz

Position: FAV

Testimony Supporting SB342
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 6, 2026

Andrew Hinz
1427 Park Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21217
ahinz61@outlook.com
443-617-4079

Position: SUPPORT

Members of the Committee,

As a lifelong, 65 years, Maryland resident and taxpayer I urge you to pass SB342.

SB342 will reduce litter in our neighborhoods significantly—I have not met a person who does not share this goal, and the litter is worse in underserved communities, and it demoralizes our young people.

SB342 will significantly reduce plastic in our waterways—I am an avid hiker and kayaker and it is near impossible to spend time in our Maryland waterways now without coming across plastic pollution, overwhelmingly beverage containers.

SB342 will significantly reduce the amount of single-use plastic incinerated in the municipal waste incinerator 3 miles from where I live, which causes 800 premature deaths EVERY YEAR. Fracking wells and wastewater have been proven to cause childhood cancers. Fracturing rock and poisoning children to produce beverage containers and then burning those containers harming everyone is simply NOT SUSTAINABLE.

SB342 will be paid for by the polluters responsible for our single-use plastic nightmare.

Ask most any kid living in an urban area what is one of the biggest problems in their neighborhood and they will say litter--tell them we are going to start giving people ten cents for every beverage container they return instead of throwing away, or find in their neighborhood and return, and they are instantly on board with the idea.

We need our kids to be on board. Please pass SB342, for our kids if for no other reason.

SB0342_FAV_MedChi_MD Beverage Container Recycling

Uploaded by: Ashton DeLong

Position: FAV



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Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 10, 2026

Senate Bill 342 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

POSITION: SUPPORT

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society (“MedChi”), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** *Senate Bill 342: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*. Senate Bill 342 establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, which aims to increase beverage container reuse, recycling, and access to water alternatives.

MedChi is particularly supportive of the grant provisions in Senate Bill 342, including grants to expand refillable water stations. This initiative aligns with MedChi’s long-standing partnership with Sugar Free Kids Maryland, and our shared goal of reducing excessive sugar consumption. More refillable water stations mean more Marylanders can choose clean and convenient water instead of sugary bottled beverages, which has the potential to improve the health of all Marylanders. It is MedChi’s view that this increased access to water has the potential to improve public health in Maryland.

MedChi, therefore, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 342.

For more information contact:

Ashton DeLong, Esq., CIPP/US

General Counsel

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SB342_Brooks_B_Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 342
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and
Litter Reduction Program/ “The Maryland Bottle Bill”

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 10, 2026

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB 342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill. The purpose of this bill is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, while also improving environmental quality and reducing costs borne by taxpayers and local governments.

Of the 5.5 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland each year, only about a quarter are recycled. The other four billion containers are discarded as waste in landfills, along roadsides, in waterways or through incineration. Beverage container litter is pervasive. More than half the trash captured in traps on the Anacostia River is beverage containers. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has declared the Anacostia watershed and Baltimore Harbor to be impaired by trash and regulated by the EPA under the Clean Water Act. Our state, which is home to the largest estuary in the country — the Chesapeake Bay — thus has two of the nation’s three bodies of water that are impaired by trash.

Plastic litter floating down our waterways is contributing to a plastic pollution and microplastic crisis. This debris degrades into smaller pieces that threaten both wildlife and human health. Scientists have found microplastics and smaller nanoplastics in virtually every organ in the human body, including the brain. The plastic particles in our bodies are a source of inflammation and leach toxins embedded in the plastic into our bodies. In 2024 alone, the State Highway Administration captured about 3.3 million pounds of roadside litter at a cost of \$17.6 million, up from \$8.9 million in 2020.

To reduce litter, trashed containers, and recover more containers for recycling, ten other states and about sixty territories or countries worldwide have implemented successful beverage

container deposit programs. These programs aim to change consumer behavior by adding a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the containers are returned for recycling. Two states — Michigan and Oregon — have even achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit.

How the Program Would Work

SB 342 would add a 10-15 cent deposit on the price of beverages in glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers, depending on the size of the container. The deposits would be fully refunded when the empty containers are returned for recycling. The program would maximize the convenience of returning empty containers and collecting refunds for consumers and businesses.

Customers would return bottles and cans at dedicated redemption facilities or a convenient retailer's place of business using reverse vending machines, a bag drop, or other redemption method.

- Reverse vending machines accept individual containers, one at a time, counting and verifying that the containers were subject to a deposit, crushing them in the back of the machine, and issuing a scrip to the customer for the amount of the refund owed, which can be cashed in at the retailer's checkout.
- Bag drops accept the redemptions outside of retail establishments. These standalone facilities are often shared by more than one retailer, and are located in commercial zones, parking areas, or municipal sites. Customers create an account and may leave unsorted containers of different types in a drop-off bag with their personal barcode affixed. The bags are collected by the system operator, counted and sorted off-site, and the customer receives the refunded deposits in their account. They can access the funds in the account at a small kiosk in the store, which issues a scrip that can be cashed in at the retailer's checkout.

Retailers receive a handling fee per container to finance the redemption technology (e.g., a reverse vending machine, bag drop, or other technology), and any labor or sorting for taking back used containers. Small retailers with less than 3,000 square feet of sales area or large retailers with 150 square feet or less of shelf space displaying redeemable containers are not required to take back used containers but must post at their entrances the location of the nearest reverse vending machine.

Restaurants, bars, hotels, and large venues where customers consume beverages on the premises pay the deposit when they purchase beverages, but do not pass the deposit on to customers. These "on premises" sellers can obtain a refund when they offer the empty containers for pick-up by the system operator, and a per container materials handling fee per container for the costs of collection and preliminary sorting.

A producer-funded Beverage Container Stewardship Organization operates the program and manages redemption, collection, and recycling of the collected containers, subject to approval of a Stewardship Plan and oversight by the Maryland Department of the Environment. This stewardship model ensures the system is self-financing and relieves local governments of the costs of landfilling, incinerating, and recycling beverage containers that are diverted to the program, as well as cleanup costs. In addition, the bill directs the Chesapeake Bay Trust to administer a dedicated grant program that supports development of beverage container reuse programs, litter reduction, recycling infrastructure, and public water fountains, to reduce the use of single-use water bottles.

The program places no implementation or enforcement obligations on local governments. They may set up their own redemption centers and receive a handling fee for returned containers, if they choose to. Most would realize cost savings from avoiding the collection and processing of beverage container waste or recyclables along with the cost of financing litter clean-ups. However, if a local government documents a net loss attributable to the deposit program, this initiative would provide compensation during the first three years of operation.

The Stewardship Organization would compensate both public and private materials recovery facilities (MRFs) for the costs of collecting, sorting, processing, and transporting all empty unredeemed redeemable beverage containers that they capture, which they may sell and retain the revenue. Curbside recycling programs would continue to operate in Maryland (as they do in all ten states with a bottle bill).

The Program's Targets

The deposit would begin on January 1, 2029. Based on experience in other states, the program should reduce beverage container litter by at least 70-84%. Overall, this objective aims to achieve a 70% redemption rate for beverage containers by December 2030 and a 90% redemption rate by December 2033. The program aims for at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in Maryland to be refillable by December 2038.

The Program's Benefits

SB 342 would reduce the volume of litter and plastic pollution from beverage containers by quadrupling Maryland's recycling rate for beverage containers, from about 25% to at least 90%. It would capture an estimated 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually in Maryland, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, thus reducing litter and plastic pollution while diverting those containers to recycling. In addition, this legislation would:

- Increase the availability of high-quality, food-grade materials that can be used to manufacture new beverage containers and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually, comparable to removing the emissions of more than 50,000 cars from the road.

- Provide cost savings for taxpayers and local governments. Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection and processing of the three-quarters of beverage containers currently disposed of in the waste stream or littered.
- Create new jobs in recycling and servicing redemption technologies. Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration of beverage containers.
- Serve as a launching pad for investments in reusable and refillable beverage containers, further promoting a circular economy and zero waste.
- Pose no burden on taxpayers. The program is self-financing.

The program has overwhelming public support.

A statewide public opinion survey conducted in early 2025 found that 89-91% of registered voters in Maryland would support a beverage container redemption program with a 10-cent refundable deposit on the sale of beverages in plastic, metal, or glass containers, financed and implemented by beverage producers, not taxpayers. The poll also found that 94% of respondents were very concerned (54%) or somewhat concerned (40%) about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution, and that 95% of respondents were very concerned (63%) or somewhat concerned (32%) about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution in Maryland.

Conclusion

SB 342 would make producers responsible for reducing beverage container litter and plastic pollution, by diverting empty beverage containers from disposal and increasing their recovery for recycling. Last session, the General Assembly took an important step by passing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation, recognizing the need to hold producers responsible for rightsizing packaging, redesigning hard-to-recycle packaging for recyclability and reducing its toxicity. It explicitly states that the passage of the packaging EPR legislation “may not be construed to...preclude the separate adoption of a beverage container deposit return program in the State to reduce beverage container pollution and plastic waste.” (§9-2504) EPR for packaging and beverage container deposit-refund systems work synergistically to maximize the benefits of both programs. The Maryland Bottle Bill advances this progress by offering a proven approach to keeping beverage containers, which consistently rank among the most littered items in our communities, out of our streets and waterways and reducing plastic pollution, with the creation of a deposit-return system.

For these reasons I am requesting a favorable report on SB 342.

With kindest regards,



Benjamin Brooks

SB342_CRI_EPR-DRS Factsheet.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

THE STATUS OF EPR-PPP AND DRS AROUND THE WORLD

Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and/or printed paper laws (EPR-PPP) and Deposit Return System laws (DRS) often go hand-in-hand. As a general term, EPR is a policy approach that makes producers legally and financially responsible for the end-of-life of their products, in this case, packaging. EPR for packaging programs often include single-use packaging, printing and writing paper, and/or single-use food service ware, although every program covers different products. EPR-PPP and DRS systems work in tandem to reduce waste and increase recycling. This factsheet depicts which states, provinces, territories, and countries have DRS programs, which have EPR-PPP programs, and which have both. Note that there is no uniformity among DRS and EPR for Packaging programs – every program is unique and may have a unique implementation process.

DRS ONLY - FULLY IMPLEMENTED (26)

Australian Capital Territory, AUS
 Connecticut, USA
 Ecuador
 Hawaii, USA
 Iceland
 Iowa, USA
 Israel
 Kiribati
 Kosovo
 Massachusetts, USA
 Michigan, USA
 Micronesia
 New York, USA
 New South Wales, AUS
 Newfoundland and Labrador, CA
 Northern Territory, AUS
 Northwest Territories, CA
 Prince Edward Island, CA
 Queensland, AUS
 South Australia, AUS
 Seychelles
 Switzerland
 Tasmania, AUS
 Victoria, AUS
 Western Australia, AUS
 Vermont, USA

DRS ONLY- IMPLEMENTATION IN PROCESS (7)

British Virgin Islands
 Curacao
 Fiji*
 Guam*
 Jamaica
 Turks & Caicos*
 Trinidad and Tobago

BOTH DRS AND EPR-PPP FULLY IMPLEMENTED (23)

Austria	Manitoba, CA
British Columbia, CA	Netherlands
Croatia	Norway
Denmark	Ontario, CA
Estonia	Oregon, USA
Finland	Poland
Germany	Quebec, CA
Hungary	Romania
Ireland	Saskatchewan, CA
Latvia	Slovakia
Lithuania	Sweden
Malta	

DRS FULLY IMPLEMENTED, EPR-PPP IN PROCESS (7)

Alberta, CA
 Barbados
 California, USA
 Maine, USA
 New Brunswick, CA
 Nova Scotia, CA
 Yukon Territory, CA

EPR-PPP FULLY IMPLEMENTED, DRS IN PROCESS (13)

Cyprus
 Czechia
 England, UK
 Greece
 Goa, India
 Maharashtra, India
 New Zealand*
 Northern Ireland, UK
 Portugal
 Scotland, UK
 Spain
 Uruguay
 Wales, UK

EPR-PPP ONLY - FULLY IMPLEMENTED (15)

Belgium
 Brazil
 Bulgaria
 Chile
 Columbia
 France
 India
 Italy
 Japan
 Luxembourg
 Philippines
 Slovenia
 South Africa
 South Korea
 Venezuela

EPR-PPP ONLY - IMPLEMENTATION IN PROCESS (6)

Colorado, USA
 Dominican Republic
 Kenya
 Maryland, USA
 Minnesota, USA
 Washington, USA

* indicates a DRS Program where a law has passed, but the implementation is delayed indefinitely

NOTES:

- In EU Member States, EPR is legally mandated for packaging, electronics, batteries, and textiles.
- Because Australia's EPR-PPP (through the Australian Packaging Covenant Organization) system is not legally mandated, CRI has not counted it in the EPR-PPP categories.
- India's EPR for Packaging program is country-wide. Maharashtra and Goa are currently the only states with DRS being implemented.
- Switzerland's DRS requires that a deposit be imposed on beverage containers if the recycling rates fall below 75%. It is not currently in effect because the recycling rate is higher.
- Oregon's EPR-PPP program begins July 1, 2025.
- In Seychelles, there is no widespread program; a "Memorandum of Understanding" was signed between the government and two beverage producers, and have since expanded into smaller programs.

SB342_FactSheet.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

Maryland Needs a Bottle Bill!

(HB 331 / SB 342)

The Problem

About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually.¹ Despite widespread availability of curbside collection of recyclables and public recycling receptacles, only a quarter of the containers (25%) are captured for recycling. More than 4 billion containers a year, 2.6 billion of which are plastic, are left in the environment—in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways—or incinerated. The number littered is significant: Beverage containers are more than half of the trash by volume in the Anacostia watershed's trash traps.²

Plastic beverage containers pollute our waterways and pose a threat to wildlife and human health. They break up into small pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Scientists estimate that we are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic weekly.



Courtesy of Anacostia Watershed Society

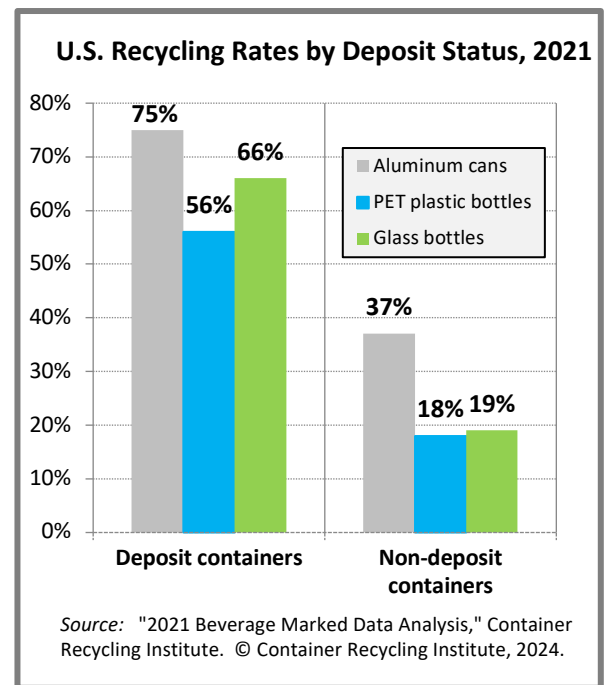
The Solution

Beverage container deposit programs, also known as “bottle bills,” are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. Ten states, covering more than 90 million people, have longstanding, successful programs.³ They add a small deposit to the purchase price of beverage containers that is refunded to customers when the containers are returned for recycling. When empty beverage containers can be redeemed for cash, fewer are littered or likely to remain littered. Purchase the beverage, borrow the container! The refundable deposit is an incentive to return.

Deposit programs also dramatically increase beverage container recycling (figure at right). The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is 2-3 times higher than for non-deposit containers, and the impact is greater with higher deposits. States with a 10-cent deposit have achieved container recycling rates of 90%.

How Would the Program Operate?

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, depending on container size. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. The program would rely on reverse vending machines and other new technologies for convenient container redemption to achieve at least a 90% recovery rate.



¹ Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Market Data Analysis, based on 2021 data.

² Anacostia Watershed Society.

³ California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont. Recycling rates in 2021 ranged from 50% to 89%. There are currently 72 container deposit programs worldwide in 61 countries. Increased interest in the past decade has been fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. Collins, Susan. 2020. "International Embrace," *Plastics Recycling Update*, Winter, pp. 38-43.

The program would be operated by a nonprofit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization representing all producers that sell beverages in the state. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) would select the Organization and provide substantial oversight, approving stewardship plans and annual reports and setting the program's convenience standards and handling fees. An Advisory Council of stakeholders would advise MDE on plan approval, implementation, and performance. The program would be self-financing from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. Ten percent of unclaimed deposits would fund a Grant Program to increase the reuse of beverage containers.



A reverse vending machine

The Program's Benefits

- **Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution, and an increase in water quality.** It would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles.
- **Quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate.** The estimated recycling rate, currently only 25% of containers sold in the state, would increase to more than 90%.
- **Increase in high quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers.** The program would generate an additional 13,328 tons of aluminum, 47,665 tons of PET plastic, 7,847 tons of HDPE plastic, and 159,397 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers, annually.
- **Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.** By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 50,371 cars.
- **Savings for taxpayers and local governments.** Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection, processing, and recycling of beverage containers currently disposed, littered, and recycled, diverting materials from landfills and incinerators, saving costs for taxpayers and local governments.
- **Investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems.** Deposits are critical for development of refillable and reusable containers. The program would launch that transition.
- **Job creation.** Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times more jobs as do landfilling or incineration.

Support the Maryland Bottle Bill in 2026 to reduce litter, prevent plastic pollution, increase recycling, and conserve resources! It passed the House Environment and Transportation Committee in 2025! We have momentum!

TAKE ACTION!
 Ask your State elected officials to pass the Maryland Bottle Bill in 2026!!

SCAN ME

SB342_GonzalesReport.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

★ GONZALES ★
Polls, Inc.



MARYLAND POLL

January 2025

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Background and Methodology

Patrick E. Gonzales graduated magna cum laude from the University of Baltimore with a degree in political science.

His career in the field of public opinion research began in the mid-1980s as an analyst with *Mason-Dixon Opinion Research*. During this time, Mr. Gonzales helped develop, craft and implement election surveys and exit polls for television and radio in the Baltimore-Washington D.C. metro area.

Mr. Gonzales has polled and analyzed thousands of elections in Maryland and across the country over the past forty years. Further, he and his associates have conducted numerous market research projects, crafting message development plans and generating strategy blueprints for businesses and organizations throughout the state.

Over his decades of conducting public opinion polls, Patrick Gonzales has been widely recognized by his peers for his ability to conduct unbiased surveys, and analyze the results in an impartial, evenhanded manner.

Mr. Gonzales appears frequently on radio and television in the Baltimore-D.C. region as a guest commentator.

This poll was conducted by ***Gonzales Research & Media Services, Inc.*** from December 27th, 2024 through January 4th, 2025. A total of 811 registered voters in Maryland, who indicated they are likely to vote in the next election, were queried by live telephone interviews, utilizing both landline and cell phone numbers. A cross-section of interviews was conducted throughout the state, reflecting general election voting patterns.

The margin of error (MOE), per accepted statistical standards, is a range of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. If the entire population was surveyed, there is a 95% probability that the true numbers would fall within this range.

Gonzales Maryland Poll – January 2025 Beverage Container Results

Environmental Impact, Container Litter and Pollution – Level of Concern

About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only a quarter of them are recycled. Because of this, four billion containers are left in the environment annually. We asked voters, based on this, how concerned they are about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution.

Statewide, a majority 54% are very concerned about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution, 40% are somewhat concerned, and only 5% are not concerned.

Sixty-seven percent of Democrats, 61% of African Americans, and 74% of voters in Baltimore City are very concerned about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution.

Litter and Pollution	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>
Statewide	54%	40%
Democrat	67%	29%
Republican	37%	55%
Independent	42%	48%
White	51%	42%
African American	61%	34%
Other	51%	48%
Women	60%	35%
Men	47%	46%
18-34	53%	39%
35-49	48%	46%
50-64	54%	38%
65 and older	58%	36%
Rural Maryland	47%	45%
Baltimore City	74%	23%
Baltimore Suburbs	48%	44%
Washington Suburbs	58%	37%

Health Impact, Plastic Beverage Containers – Level of Concern

Littered beverage containers, most of them plastic, wash into Maryland's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay every year. Plastic bottles break into ever smaller particles over time and are consumed by wildlife and people. Plastic particles have been found in virtually every human organ.

Based on this, we asked Marylanders how concerned they are about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution in Maryland.

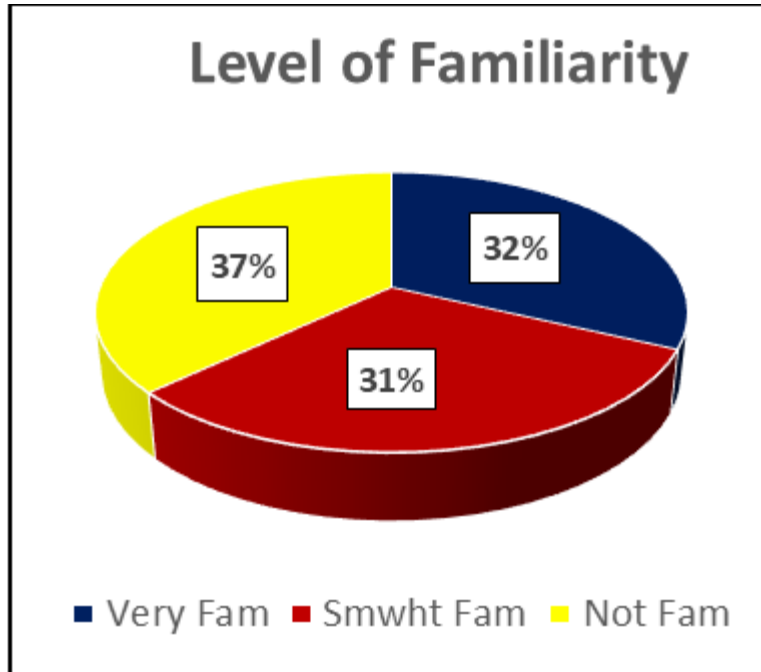
Statewide, a substantial 63% are very concerned about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution in Maryland, 32% are somewhat concerned, and a scant 4% are not concerned.

Seventy-four percent of Democrats, 71% of African Americans, and 72% of voters residing in the Washington Suburbs are very concerned about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution.

Plastic Beverage Containers	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>
Statewide	63%	32%
Democrat	74%	21%
Republican	39%	54%
Independent	64%	32%
White	58%	38%
African American	71%	24%
Other	64%	29%
Women	69%	27%
Men	55%	39%
18-34	63%	32%
35-49	64%	33%
50-64	61%	34%
65 and older	63%	31%
Rural Maryland	51%	43%
Baltimore City	71%	26%
Baltimore Suburbs	56%	38%
Washington Suburbs	72%	24%

Beverage Container Redemption Program – Level of Familiarity

Among Maryland voters, 32% are very familiar with beverage container redemption programs, where consumers pay a small, 5-10 cent deposit per container when purchasing a beverage, 31% are somewhat familiar with beverage container redemption programs, and 37% are not familiar.



Level of Familiarity	<u>Very Fam</u>	<u>Smwht Fam</u>	<u>Not Fam</u>
Statewide	32%	31%	37%
Democrat	35%	27%	37%
Republican	28%	37%	34%
Independent	30%	31%	38%
White	31%	35%	33%
African American	29%	20%	49%
Other	42%	34%	23%
Women	35%	30%	34%
Men	29%	31%	39%

Beverage Container Redemption Program – Level of Support

We told voters that state legislators are considering a beverage container redemption program to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, which would place a 10-cent refundable deposit on the sale of beverages in plastic, metal, or glass containers. The deposit would be refunded when the empty containers are returned for recycling, and the program would be financed by beverage companies, not taxpayers.

We then asked if they would support or oppose a beverage container redemption program to reduce litter and plastic pollution in Maryland?

Statewide, an overwhelming 89% say they would support such a program to reduce litter and plastic pollution in Maryland (70% “strongly” support and 19% “somewhat” support), while a mere 8% would oppose a beverage container redemption program, with 3% giving no answer.

Beverage Container Redemption	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Statewide	89%	8%
Democrat	92%	5%
Republican	89%	7%
Independent	81%	18%
White	87%	9%
African American	96%	4%
Other	80%	18%
Women	90%	7%
Men	87%	10%
18-34	90%	6%
35-49	85%	11%
50-64	89%	9%
65 and older	91%	7%
Rural Maryland	87%	10%
Baltimore City	95%	3%
Baltimore Suburbs	87%	11%
Washington Suburbs	90%	6%

Positive Impacts From Program – Effect on Support

We explained to respondents that the program would capture 90% of used beverage containers for recycling and remove 3.6 billion cans and bottles from the environment annually, and told them it would reduce litter and greenhouse gas emissions, create new recycling jobs, and save money for local governments.

We then asked if these impacts made them more likely or less likely to support a Maryland beverage container redemption program, or if they made no difference to them.

Among voters, support was sky high already for a beverage container redemption program. Statewide, 65% say these impacts make them more likely to support a beverage container redemption program (39% “much” more likely and 26% “somewhat” more likely), an infinitesimal 2% say the impacts make them less likely, and 33% say the impacts make no difference to them.

Beverage Container Redemption Program – Informed Support

After they had heard a little more about beverage container litter, the plastic pollution problem, and the proposed program, 91% of voters say they support a beverage container redemption program in Maryland, and 8% oppose such a program.

Redemption Program - Informed	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Statewide	91%	8%
Democrat	93%	5%
Republican	92%	6%
Independent	81%	17%
White	89%	9%
African American	96%	4%
Other	84%	15%
Women	91%	8%
Men	90%	8%

Appendix A: Data Tables

QUESTION: 5.5 Billion Beverage Container Impact – Level of Concern *About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only a quarter of them are recycled. More than four billion containers are left in the environment – in landfills or as litter - or incinerated. Beverage containers are a major share of litter captured by trash traps on the Anacostia River and in Baltimore Harbor*

How concerned are you about the environmental impact of beverage container litter and pollution: very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned?

<u>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very concerned	435	53.6 %
Somewhat concerned	324	40.0 %
Not concerned	40	4.9 %
<u>No answer</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1.5 %</u>
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

<u>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER</u>				
	<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RESULTS

Statewide	435 53.6%	324 40.0%	40 4.9%	12 1.5%
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N=811

<u>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER</u>				
	<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	287 66.6%	125 29.0%	11 2.6%	8 1.9%
Republican	83 37.1%	124 55.4%	17 7.6%	0 0.0%
Unaffiliated	65 41.7%	75 48.1%	12 7.7%	4 2.6%

N=811

	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER			
	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>RACE/ETHNICITY</u>				
White	241 50.6%	202 42.4%	27 5.7%	6 1.3%
African American	148 60.7%	82 33.6%	9 3.7%	5 2.0%
Other/No answer	46 50.5%	40 44.0%	4 4.4%	1 1.1%

N=811

	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER			
	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>				
Female	260 59.5%	154 35.2%	17 3.9%	6 1.4%
Male	175 46.8%	170 45.5%	23 6.1%	6 1.6%

N=811

	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER			
	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>AGE</u>				
18 to 34	77 53.1%	57 39.3%	8 5.5%	3 2.1%
35 to 49	95 47.7%	92 46.2%	8 4.0%	4 2.0%
50 to 64	130 54.4%	92 38.5%	13 5.4%	4 1.7%
65 and older	133 58.3%	83 36.4%	11 4.8%	1 0.4%

N=811

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONTAINER LITTER

	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>REGION</u>				
Rural Maryland	59 46.8%	57 45.2%	7 5.6%	3 2.4%
Baltimore City	46 74.2%	14 22.6%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	154 48.4%	140 44.0%	19 6.0%	5 1.6%
Washington Suburbs	176 57.7%	113 37.0%	13 4.3%	3 1.0%

QUESTION: Littered Beverage Container Impact – Level of Concern *Littered beverage containers, most of them plastic, wash into Maryland’s waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Plastic bottles break into ever smaller particles over time and are ingested by wildlife and people. Plastic particles have been found in virtually every human organ. How concerned are you about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution in Maryland: very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned?*

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very concerned	507	62.5 %
Somewhat concerned	263	32.4 %
Not concerned	34	4.2 %
No answer	7	0.9 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RESULTS

Statewide	507 62.5%	263 32.4%	34 4.2%	7 0.9%
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N=811

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	319 74.0%	91 21.1%	18 4.2%	3 0.7%
Republican	88 39.3%	122 54.5%	11 4.9%	3 1.3%
Unaffiliated	100 64.1%	50 32.1%	5 3.2%	1 0.6%

N=811

<u>HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER</u>			
<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	277 58.2%	179 37.6%	16 3.4%	4 0.8%
African American	172 70.5%	58 23.8%	12 4.9%	2 0.8%
Other/No answer	58 63.7%	26 28.6%	6 6.6%	1 1.1%

N=811

	HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER			
	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>				
Female	300 68.6%	119 27.2%	15 3.4%	3 0.7%
Male	207 55.3%	144 38.5%	19 5.1%	4 1.1%

N=811

	HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER			
	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>AGE</u>				
18 to 34	91 62.8%	46 31.7%	6 4.1%	2 1.4%
35 to 49	127 63.8%	65 32.7%	7 3.5%	0 0.0%
50 to 64	145 60.7%	82 34.3%	10 4.2%	2 0.8%
65 and older	144 63.2%	70 30.7%	11 4.8%	3 1.3%

N=811

	HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER			
	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No answer
<u>REGION</u>				
Rural Maryland	64 50.8%	54 42.9%	6 4.8%	2 1.6%
Baltimore City	44 71.0%	16 25.8%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	179 56.3%	120 37.7%	17 5.3%	2 0.6%
Washington Suburbs	220 72.1%	73 23.9%	10 3.3%	2 0.7%

QUESTION: Beverage Container Redemption – Level of Familiarity *Some states have a beverage container redemption program, where consumers pay a small, 5-10 cent deposit per container when purchasing a beverage. The deposit is refunded when the containers are returned to a retailer or redemption center for recycling. These programs are highly effective in reducing beverage container litter and waste.*

How familiar would you say you are with beverage container redemption programs: very familiar, somewhat familiar, or not familiar?

<u>PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very familiar	258	31.8 %
Somewhat familiar	248	30.6 %
Not familiar	296	36.5 %
No answer	9	1.1 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

<u>PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY</u>			
<u>Very familiar</u>	<u>Somewhat familiar</u>	<u>Not familiar</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RESULTS

Statewide	258 31.8%	248 30.6%	296 36.5%	9 1.1%
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N=811

<u>PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY</u>			
<u>Very familiar</u>	<u>Somewhat familiar</u>	<u>Not familiar</u>	<u>No answer</u>

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	150 34.8%	117 27.1%	159 36.9%	5 1.2%
Republican	62 27.7%	83 37.1%	77 34.4%	2 0.9%
Unaffiliated	46 29.5%	48 30.8%	60 38.5%	2 1.3%

N=811

<u>PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY</u>			
<u>Very familiar</u>	<u>Somewhat familiar</u>	<u>Not familiar</u>	<u>No answer</u>

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	149 31.3%	168 35.3%	155 32.6%	4 0.8%
African American	71 29.1%	49 20.1%	120 49.2%	4 1.6%
Other/No answer	38 41.8%	31 34.1%	21 23.1%	1 1.1%

N=811

	PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY			
	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>				
Female	151 34.6%	132 30.2%	149 34.1%	5 1.1%
Male	107 28.6%	116 31.0%	147 39.3%	4 1.1%

N=811

	PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY			
	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer
<u>AGE</u>				
18 to 34	42 29.0%	48 33.1%	54 37.2%	1 0.7%
35 to 49	53 26.6%	69 34.7%	75 37.7%	2 1.0%
50 to 64	81 33.9%	73 30.5%	82 34.3%	3 1.3%
65 and older	82 36.0%	58 25.4%	85 37.3%	3 1.3%

N=811

	PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY			
	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar	No answer
<u>REGION</u>				
Rural Maryland	36 28.6%	43 34.1%	46 36.5%	1 0.8%
Baltimore City	19 30.6%	12 19.4%	30 48.4%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	104 32.7%	101 31.8%	109 34.3%	4 1.3%
Washington Suburbs	99 32.5%	92 30.2%	111 36.4%	3 1.0%

QUESTION: Beverage Container Redemption Program *Maryland legislators are considering a beverage container redemption program to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would place a 10-cent refundable deposit on the sale of beverages in plastic, metal, or glass containers. The deposit would be refunded when the empty containers are returned for recycling. The program would be financed by beverage companies, not taxpayers.*

Would you personally support or oppose a beverage container redemption program to reduce litter and plastic pollution in Maryland?

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM	Number	Percent
Support	721	88.9 %
Oppose	67	8.3 %
No answer	23	2.8 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	721 88.9%	67 8.3%	23 2.8%
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N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
Support	Oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	395 91.6%	23 5.3%	13 3.0%
Republican	200 89.3%	16 7.1%	8 3.6%
Unaffiliated	126 80.8%	28 17.9%	2 1.3%

N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	415 87.2%	41 8.6%	20 4.2%
African American	233 95.5%	10 4.1%	1 0.4%
Other/No answer	73 80.2%	16 17.6%	2 2.2%

N=811

	BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>			
Female	395 90.4%	30 6.9%	12 2.7%
Male	326 87.2%	37 9.9%	11 2.9%

N=811

	BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>AGE</u>			
18 to 34	131 90.3%	9 6.2%	5 3.4%
35 to 49	170 85.4%	22 11.1%	7 3.5%
50 to 64	212 88.7%	21 8.8%	6 2.5%
65 and older	208 91.2%	15 6.6%	5 2.2%

N=811

	BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM		
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>REGION</u>			
Rural Maryland	109 86.5%	13 10.3%	4 3.2%
Baltimore City	59 95.2%	2 3.2%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	278 87.4%	34 10.7%	6 1.9%
Washington Suburbs	275 90.2%	18 5.9%	12 3.9%

Program Support **by** Program Familiarity


N=811

BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM

Support Oppose No answer

PROGRAMS - LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY

Very familiar	232 89.9%	20 7.8%	6 2.3%
Somewhat familiar	218 87.9%	23 9.3%	7 2.8%
Not familiar	265 89.5%	21 7.1%	10 3.4%
No answer	6 66.7%	3 33.3%	0 0.0%



No matter the level of familiarity with the redemption program among Marylanders, support for the program is off the chart

INTENSITY - Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY	Number	Percent
Strongly support	568	70.0 %
Somewhat support	153	18.9 %
Somewhat oppose	46	5.7 %
Strongly oppose	21	2.6 %
No answer	23	2.8 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	568 70.0%	153 18.9%	46 5.7%	21 2.6%	23 2.8%
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N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	329 76.3%	66 15.3%	14 3.2%	9 2.1%	13 3.0%
Republican	145 64.7%	55 24.6%	13 5.8%	3 1.3%	8 3.6%
Unaffiliated	94 60.3%	32 20.5%	19 12.2%	9 5.8%	2 1.3%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	316 66.4%	99 20.8%	30 6.3%	11 2.3%	20 4.2%
African American	197 80.7%	36 14.8%	6 2.5%	4 1.6%	1 0.4%
Other/No answer	55 60.4%	18 19.8%	10 11.0%	6 6.6%	2 2.2%

N=811

	REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>					
Female	324 74.1%	71 16.2%	21 4.8%	9 2.1%	12 2.7%
Male	244 65.2%	82 21.9%	25 6.7%	12 3.2%	11 2.9%

N=811

	REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
<u>AGE</u>					
18 to 34	97 66.9%	34 23.4%	6 4.1%	3 2.1%	5 3.4%
35 to 49	135 67.8%	35 17.6%	16 8.0%	6 3.0%	7 3.5%
50 to 64	163 68.2%	49 20.5%	16 6.7%	5 2.1%	6 2.5%
65 and older	173 75.9%	35 15.4%	8 3.5%	7 3.1%	5 2.2%

N=811

	REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INTENSITY				
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
<u>REGION</u>					
Rural Maryland	82 65.1%	27 21.4%	8 6.3%	5 4.0%	4 3.2%
Baltimore City	50 80.6%	9 14.5%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	214 67.3%	64 20.1%	26 8.2%	8 2.5%	6 1.9%
Washington Suburbs	222 72.8%	53 17.4%	11 3.6%	7 2.3%	12 3.9%

QUESTION: Reduce Litter, Save Money - Impact On Support *The Maryland program would capture 90% of used beverage containers for recycling and remove 3.6 billion cans and bottles from the environment annually, most of which are plastic bottles. It would reduce litter and greenhouse gas emissions, create new recycling jobs, and save money for local governments.*

Do these impacts make you more likely or less likely to support a Maryland beverage container redemption program, or do they make no difference to you?

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
	Number	Percent
More likely	528	65.1 %
Less likely	19	2.3 %
No Effect	264	32.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
More likely	Less likely	No Effect

RESULTS

Statewide	528 65.1%	19 2.3%	264 32.6%
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N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
More likely	Less likely	No Effect

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	304 70.5%	8 1.9%	119 27.6%
Republican	118 52.7%	3 1.3%	103 46.0%
Unaffiliated	106 67.9%	8 5.1%	42 26.9%

N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
More likely	Less likely	No Effect

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	302 63.4%	13 2.7%	161 33.8%
African American	169 69.3%	3 1.2%	72 29.5%
Other/No answer	57 62.6%	3 3.3%	31 34.1%

N=811

	POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
	More likely	Less likely	No Effect
<u>GENDER</u>			
Female	264 60.4%	12 2.7%	161 36.8%
Male	264 70.6%	7 1.9%	103 27.5%

N=811

	POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
	More likely	Less likely	No Effect
<u>AGE</u>			
18 to 34	99 68.3%	5 3.4%	41 28.3%
35 to 49	136 68.3%	4 2.0%	59 29.6%
50 to 64	151 63.2%	6 2.5%	82 34.3%
65 and older	142 62.3%	4 1.8%	82 36.0%

N=811

	POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT		
	More likely	Less likely	No Effect
<u>REGION</u>			
Rural Maryland	64 50.8%	5 4.0%	57 45.2%
Baltimore City	46 74.2%	1 1.6%	15 24.2%
Baltimore Suburbs	206 64.8%	7 2.2%	105 33.0%
Washington Suburbs	212 69.5%	6 2.0%	87 28.5%

Effect on Support **by** Plastic Litter Health Impacts


N=811

POSITIVE IMPACTS - EFFECT ON SUPPORT

	More likely	Less likely	No Effect
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HEALTH IMPACT PLASTIC LITTER

Very concerned	363 71.6%	6 1.2%	138 27.2%
Somewhat concerned	144 54.8%	11 4.2%	108 41.1%
Not concerned	16 47.1%	0 0.0%	18 52.9%
No answer	5 71.4%	2 28.6%	0 0.0%



The greater the level of concern over the health impacts of plastic litter, the greater the positive impacts of a redemption program effect support

INTENSITY - Is that much or somewhat more likely/ less likely?

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY	Number	Percent
Much more likely	315	38.8 %
Somewhat more likely	213	26.3 %
Somewhat less likely	11	1.4 %
Much less likely	8	1.0 %
No Effect	264	32.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect

RESULTS

Statewide	315 38.8%	213 26.3%	11 1.4%	8 1.0%	264 32.6%
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N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	174 40.4%	130 30.2%	6 1.4%	2 0.5%	119 27.6%
Republican	79 35.3%	39 17.4%	3 1.3%	0 0.0%	103 46.0%
Unaffiliated	62 39.7%	44 28.2%	2 1.3%	6 3.8%	42 26.9%

N=811

EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	186 39.1%	116 24.4%	8 1.7%	5 1.1%	161 33.8%
African American	98 40.2%	71 29.1%	3 1.2%	0 0.0%	72 29.5%
Other/No answer	31 34.1%	26 28.6%	0 0.0%	3 3.3%	31 34.1%

N=811

	EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect
<u>GENDER</u>					
Female	142 32.5%	122 27.9%	8 1.8%	4 0.9%	161 36.8%
Male	173 46.3%	91 24.3%	3 0.8%	4 1.1%	103 27.5%

N=811

	EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect
<u>AGE</u>					
18 to 34	57 39.3%	42 29.0%	4 2.8%	1 0.7%	41 28.3%
35 to 49	81 40.7%	55 27.6%	3 1.5%	1 0.5%	59 29.6%
50 to 64	93 38.9%	58 24.3%	1 0.4%	5 2.1%	82 34.3%
65 and older	84 36.8%	58 25.4%	3 1.3%	1 0.4%	82 36.0%

N=811

	EFFECT ON SUPPORT - INTENSITY				
	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	No Effect
<u>REGION</u>					
Rural Maryland	35 27.8%	29 23.0%	3 2.4%	2 1.6%	57 45.2%
Baltimore City	27 43.5%	19 30.6%	1 1.6%	0 0.0%	15 24.2%
Baltimore Suburbs	137 43.1%	69 21.7%	3 0.9%	4 1.3%	105 33.0%
Washington Suburbs	116 38.0%	96 31.5%	4 1.3%	2 0.7%	87 28.5%

QUESTION: Beverage Container Redemption Program - Informed *Now that you have heard a little more about beverage container litter, the plastic pollution problem, and the proposed program, would you say you support or oppose a beverage container redemption program in Maryland?*

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED	Number	Percent
Support	734	90.5 %
Oppose	64	7.9 %
No answer	13	1.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	734 90.5%	64 7.9%	13 1.6%
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N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED		
Support	Oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	401 93.0%	23 5.3%	7 1.6%
Republican	206 92.0%	14 6.3%	4 1.8%
Unaffiliated	127 81.4%	27 17.3%	2 1.3%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED		
Support	Oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	423 88.9%	41 8.6%	12 2.5%
African American	235 96.3%	9 3.7%	0 0.0%
Other/No answer	76 83.5%	14 15.4%	1 1.1%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED			
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>			
Female	396 90.6%	34 7.8%	7 1.6%
Male	338 90.4%	30 8.0%	6 1.6%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED			
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>AGE</u>			
18 to 34	132 91.0%	9 6.2%	4 2.8%
35 to 49	175 87.9%	19 9.5%	5 2.5%
50 to 64	215 90.0%	23 9.6%	1 0.4%
65 and older	212 93.0%	13 5.7%	3 1.3%

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED			
	Support	Oppose	No answer
<u>REGION</u>			
Rural Maryland	111 88.1%	14 11.1%	1 0.8%
Baltimore City	59 95.2%	2 3.2%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	284 89.3%	31 9.7%	3 0.9%
Washington Suburbs	280 91.8%	17 5.6%	8 2.6%

Program Support - Informed **by** Initial Program Support

N=811

REDEMPTION PROGRAM - INFORMED

	Support	Oppose	No answer
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BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROGRAM

Support	712 98.8%	9 1.2%	0 0.0%
Oppose	15 22.4%	52 77.6%	0 0.0%
No answer	7 30.4%	3 13.0%	13 56.5%

22% of those who initially oppose the redemption program support it after being informed of its benefits

INTENSITY - Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

INFORMED - INTENSITY	Number	Percent
Strongly support	513	63.3 %
Somewhat support	221	27.3 %
Somewhat oppose	42	5.2 %
Strongly oppose	22	2.7 %
No answer	13	1.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RESULTS

Statewide	513 63.3%	221 27.3%	42 5.2%	22 2.7%	13 1.6%
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N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

PARTY REGISTRATION

Democrat	312 72.4%	89 20.6%	13 3.0%	10 2.3%	7 1.6%
Republican	122 54.5%	84 37.5%	12 5.4%	2 0.9%	4 1.8%
Unaffiliated	79 50.6%	48 30.8%	17 10.9%	10 6.4%	2 1.3%

N=811

INFORMED - INTENSITY				
Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer

RACE/ETHNICITY

White	292 61.3%	131 27.5%	28 5.9%	13 2.7%	12 2.5%
African American	175 71.7%	60 24.6%	5 2.0%	4 1.6%	0 0.0%
Other/No answer	46 50.5%	30 33.0%	9 9.9%	5 5.5%	1 1.1%

N=811

	INFORMED - INTENSITY				
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
<u>GENDER</u>					
Female	273 62.5%	123 28.1%	23 5.3%	11 2.5%	7 1.6%
Male	240 64.2%	98 26.2%	19 5.1%	11 2.9%	6 1.6%

N=811

	INFORMED - INTENSITY				
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
<u>AGE</u>					
18 to 34	94 64.8%	38 26.2%	7 4.8%	2 1.4%	4 2.8%
35 to 49	122 61.3%	53 26.6%	13 6.5%	6 3.0%	5 2.5%
50 to 64	143 59.8%	72 30.1%	15 6.3%	8 3.3%	1 0.4%
65 and older	154 67.5%	58 25.4%	7 3.1%	6 2.6%	3 1.3%

N=811

	INFORMED - INTENSITY				
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	No answer
<u>REGION</u>					
Rural Maryland	77 61.1%	34 27.0%	11 8.7%	3 2.4%	1 0.8%
Baltimore City	45 72.6%	14 22.6%	0 0.0%	2 3.2%	1 1.6%
Baltimore Suburbs	197 61.9%	87 27.4%	21 6.6%	10 3.1%	3 0.9%
Washington Suburbs	194 63.6%	86 28.2%	10 3.3%	7 2.3%	8 2.6%

Appendix B: Maryland Poll Sample Demographics

<u>AGE</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18 to 34	145	17.9 %
35 to 49	199	24.5 %
50 to 64	239	29.5 %
65 and older	228	28.1 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>PARTY REGISTRATION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Democrat	431	53.1 %
Republican	224	27.6 %
Unaffiliated	156	19.2 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>RACE/ETHNICITY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	476	58.7 %
African American	244	30.1 %
Other/No answer	91	11.2 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>GENDER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Female	437	53.9 %
Male	374	46.1 %
Total	811	100.0 %

<u>REGION</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Rural Maryland	126	15.5 %
Baltimore City	62	7.6 %
Baltimore Suburbs	318	39.2 %
Washington Suburbs	305	37.6 %
Total	811	100.0 %

Regional Groupings

Rural Maryland – includes Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Baltimore City – includes Baltimore City.

Baltimore Suburbs – includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties.

Washington Suburbs – includes Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties.

SB342_Roadmap.pdf

Uploaded by: Benjamin Brooks

Position: FAV

Roadmap for the 2026 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (HB 331, SB 342)

Section	Page	Subject	Summary of Content
§ 9-1701	2	Definition of recycling	Conveys the existing definition of recycling in the Maryland Code.
§ 9-1702	3	Duties of the Office of Recycling	Updates the duties of the Office of Recycling to include administering the Program
§9-1707	3	Recycling Trust Fund	Creates a separate account within the State Recycling Trust Fund for the Program, consisting of registration fees, fines and penalties, and reimbursements from the Stewardship Organization(s).
§9-1737	6	Definitions	<p>Defines 265 terms used in the bill. Significantly -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Beverage</u> is any drinkable liquid intended for human oral consumptions, excepting drugs regulated under the federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and infant formula. • <u>Beverage container</u> is a bottle, can or other container that has been sealed by a manufacturer that is made of glass, metal, or plastic, and at the time of sale contains 3 liters or less of a beverage. Cartons, pouches, and aseptic packaging are not beverage containers. • <u>Producer</u> is defined here and in §9-1744. • <u>Retailer</u> is a person that sells redeemable beverage containers to a consumer in the state, including through a vending machine or online for home delivery • <u>Beverage Container Stewardship Organization</u> defined as a non-profit organization created by beverage producers to implement a beverage container stewardship plan and is approved by MDE in accordance with §9-1746. • <u>Material recovery facility</u> means a facility located in the State that collects, compacts, repackages, sorts, or processes source-separated materials for transportation and recycling.
§9-1738	12	Legislative Intent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Reduce the volume of litter and plastic pollution from beverage containers in the state by achieving a redemption rate of at least 90% for the approximately 5.5 billion single-use beverage containers sold annually in the state. (2) Provide a source of high-quality food-grade materials for recycled content in beverage and food containers. (3) Reduce the volume of beverage containers that are landfilled or incinerated in the State. (4) Reduce the costs of litter and beverage container collection, recycling, and disposal incurred by taxpayers and local government by making beverage container producers responsible for recovery, recycling, and reuse. (5) Provide incentives for increasing the use of reusable and refillable beverage containers; and (6) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to production, transportation, processing, and waste disposal of single-use beverage containers sold in the State.
§9-1739	13	Establishment of the program	Establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.
§9-1740	13	Program targets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 70% redemption rate by 12/31/2030 (2) 90% redemption rate by 12/31/2033 (3) Attainment of all convenience standards by 12/31/2028 (4) At least 10% of all beverage containers sold are returned and refilled by 12/31/2038

Section	Page	Subject	Summary of Content
§9-1741	13	Deposit established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deposit of 10¢ for beverage containers ≤24 fl. oz and 15¢ if > 24 fl. oz. • MDE may or must adjust the deposit under certain conditions • Deposit to be added to the wholesale and retail price of a redeemable beverage container on Jan. 1, 2029 • Deposit amount must appear on the sales receipt • Retail price of a redeemable beverage container sold by an on-premises seller (e.g., restaurant, hotel, stadium, etc.) may not include the refund value.
§9-1742	14	Redemption facilities, processing fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Redemption options.</u> The Program shall provide a range of options for customers and on-premises sellers to conveniently redeem empty beverage containers for the full refund value, including: (a) for customers, at a retailer’s place of business, using reverse vending machines, bag drops, and/or cash refunds by a retailer; at dedicated redemption facilities in parking lots and offices in shopping centers;; and by placing reverse vending machines, bag drops, or account-based bulk processing programs in areas with a lot of foot traffic (b) for on-premises sellers, via regular collection of empty redeemable beverage containers; access to a high-volume validation and audit system to receive a bulk rate for the refund; or access to a bag drop. • <u>Redemption centers</u> shall be licensed by MDE; MDE shall develop standards and a licensing process. • <u>Redemption at retailers.</u> (1) Retailers ≥3,000 sf sales area and > 150 sf of shelf area displaying redeemable beverage containers must establish and maintain a dedicated area to accept redeemable beverage containers, accept any redeemable beverage container returned for redemption during business hours, and pay the refund value. They may also offer redemption by reverse vending machine, bag drop, etc. Several retailers can collaborate to provide a single redemption site, subject to BCSO approval. If they are located near a redemption center in a convenience zone, may be exempted from redemption if it subsidizes that center. (2) Retailers <3,000 sf must take back for cash refund any redeemable containers that they sell and are not accepted in reverse vending machines. They must also post the location of the nearest location with a cash refund at the store’s entrance. • <u>Unacceptable containers.</u> A retailer or redemption facility may refuse to accept empty containers that are dirty or broken, contain material foreign to the normal contents of a beverage container, or that they believe were not sold in the state. • <u>Reverse vending machines (RVMS)</u> A person providing an RVM must provide an option for redeeming containers when the RVM is full, broken, or under repair, and for any redeemable containers not accepted by the RVM. • <u>Account-based bulk processing program</u> MDE shall establish a process of reviewing, approving, and monitoring an account-based bulk processing program for accuracy. • <u>Refunds</u> shall be in cash, in the form of a receipt from an RVM or account-based redemption system that can be exchanged for cash, or placed in an account that allows the person to obtain the refund within a time to be determined by MDE after dropping off the container. • Reimbursement of refunds to retailers. The Stewardship Organization shall reimburse a retailer for the value of valid receipts redeemed by consumers. • <u>Handling fee.</u> A redemption facility, retailer, or other person that accepts redeemable beverage containers for redemption shall be reimbursed by a distributor for the handling of each container redeemed. The handling fee shall be set by MDE to cover the costs of collecting, sorting, processing, and transporting empty redeemable beverage containers for recycling, reuse, or refilling. MDE may increase the handling fee if necessary to encourage establishment of more redemption facilities. • <u>On-premises sellers.</u> Shall be reimbursed by the BCSO or its agent for the handling of the empty redeemable beverage container by a “material handling fee” set by the Department. The BCSO shall pay for receptacles and labels required for collecting and pre-sorting.

Section	Page	Subject	Summary of Content
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Redeemed container materials</u>. Redeemed beverage containers shall be returned to the Beverage Container Stewardship Organization for use or sale as scrap material.
§9-1743	22	Management of deposits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Separate account for deposits</u>. A deposit initiator shall put all deposits collected into an account that is maintained separately from all other revenues. The funds in that separate account may only be used to pay the refund value of the redeemable beverage container being redeemed. • There are <u>reporting requirements</u> for deposit initiators on the number of redeemable beverage containers sold and redeemed, the deposits collected, the deposits refunded, and any income earned on the account. • <u>Unclaimed deposits</u> are defined. MDE shall determine the point at which a deposit becomes unclaimed. A deposit initiator shall transfer all unclaimed deposits to the Beverage Container Stewardship Organization at a frequency determined by MDE. • <u>Use of unclaimed deposits</u>. Beginning January 1, 2030, the Beverage Container Stewardship Organization shall transfer 10% of unclaimed deposits to the Chesapeake Bay Trust, to be used only for the costs of administering and financing the Grant Program, and 90% of unclaimed deposits to a reserve account to implement the recycling refund program.
§9-1744	22	Applicability to producers, Registration of producers by MDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines which entity is considered the “producer” responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the bill. Private label retailers do not have to register as producers if another responsible producer has contractually accepted responsibility as the producer and has joined the BCSO as responsible for that covered product. • <u>Registration</u>. Beginning January 1, 2029, a producer may not sell, offer for sale, or distribute in or import into the State a redeemable beverage container unless the producer is registered with MDE, has paid the registration fee to MDE, and, individually or as part of a Beverage Container Stewardship Organization, has a Beverage Container Stewardship Plan approved by MDE. • Registration is required on or before March 1, 2028, and each March 1st thereafter, and payment of the registration fee on a schedule to be determined by MDE.. • <u>Registration fee</u>. The annual registration fee will be established that, when combined with anticipated revenue, will produce funds sufficient to cover MDE’s estimated costs of planning, implementing, administering, monitoring, enforcing, and evaluating the program for the upcoming year, and is proportional to a producer’s share of the total number of redeemable beverage containers sold in the state for the preceding year and shall also reimburse any actual start-up costs by the MDE that were financed from the General Fund. • The fees collected are to be transferred to the State Recycling Trust Fund special account, and to be used only to cover MDE’s costs of planning, implementing, administering, monitoring, enforcing, and evaluating the Program, and the part spent on start-up and funded from the general fund shall be reimbursed.
§9-1745	25	Selection of a Beverage Container Stewardship Organization, conditions for revoca-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires MDE to select a single Beverage Container Stewardship Organization by October 1, 2027, for a period of not to exceed 10 years, to represent all producers in fulfilling the requirements of the program. • Lists the minimum criteria for selection and circumstances that would lead to revocation of approval of the Beverage Container Stewardship Organization. • If no application to operate a Beverage Container Stewardship Organization is submitted to MDE, MDE must establish or designate a Stewardship Organization to implement the program and require all producers to join and fund the designated organization as a condition of selling or distributing beverages in the State. • In case of revocation, MDE may approve one or more additional Beverage Container Stewardship Organizations.

Section	Page	Subject	Summary of Content
		tion and replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event of revocation, the trustee or escrow agent of the revoked Organization must be able to accept payments directly from producers that covers what would have been made to the revoked Organization before the stewardship plan’s termination or revocations, and make payments from the fund as directed by the Department to implement the requirements of the law.
§9-1746	27	Beverage Container Stewardship plan requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out the information required for a Beverage Container Stewardship Plan, to be submitted to MDE on or before March 1, 2028. Approved Plans expire at the end of 5 years. It must identify and include contact information for each producer to be covered under the plan, and must identify each brand of redeemable beverage container intended to be sold under the plan, including the size and material of containers for each brand and whether the containers are refillable. It must describe the location and distribution of account-based bulk processing programs, bag drops, and redemption facilities to comply with the convenience standards established by MDE and achieve the performance targets, and the actions it will take to implement the plan in conformance with specified requirements. It must include a closure plan in the event that the Beverage Container Stewardship Organization dissolves or its approval is revoked, and must include creation of a trust fund or escrow account into which all unexpended funds are deposited for use if that happens so that the producer participants may continue to meet their obligations. The BCSO must set up a trust fund or escrow account in Maryland and deposit unexpended funds for use if the BCSO dissolves or approval is revoked, so that the producers have the resources to continue. MDE shall submit a Stewardship Plan to an independent financial auditor Within 120 days after receipt of the Plan, MDE must approve, approve with conditions, or deny the Plan. The criteria for approval and process for amending a Plan are described. Plans are to be implemented within 6 months of Plan approval. The responsibilities for implementation of a Stewardship Plan are described.
§9-1747	33	Annual reporting requirements by the Beverage Container Stewardship Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes the annual reporting requirements of a Stewardship Organization with approved Stewardship Plans. Reporting starts April 1, 2030 and annually thereafter. A description of information items to be included in the report is provided. Financial, production, and sales data of individual producers shall be kept confidential. The annual report will be shared with the Advisory Council and posted on the MDE website
§9-1748	36	Local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A county or municipal corporation may not be required to host, operate, or provide land, facilities, or any other resources for the establishment or operation of a redemption facility. MDE shall establish a process for a county or municipality to create a redemption facility. Beverage containers redeemed at a county or municipal redemption center shall be credited to their recycling rate. During the first three years, a portion of program revenues shall be used to compensate local government for any documented net loss of revenue to its waste management system that can be attributed to the Program. A list of the costs and benefits to be included in these calculations is provided.
§9-1749	37	Financing	<p>Program funding is from stewardship organization fees, revenue from sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, registration fees, and penalties, and must be used to meet or exceed the program’s targets and other sections of the Subtitle.</p>

Section	Page	Subject	Summary of Content
§9-1750	38	Recycling Refund Grant Fund established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes the Beverage Container Recycling Refund Grant Program, with the purpose of providing funding an assessment of the investments and policies necessary to ensure that at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in the state are returned and refilled by 12/31/2038 and for projects that: (1) increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers in the State; (2) increase availability of public water fountains and refill stations in the State, as an alternative to bottled water, and (3) reduce beverage container litter in the State. The Chesapeake Bay Trust shall administer the Program, funded from a portion of the unredeemed deposits <i>transferred to the Chesapeake Bay Trust established under Sec 8-1902 of the Natural Resources Council.</i> The section lists the types of entities eligible for a grant and requires MDE, with input from the Advisory Council, to adopt regulations for the application process, criteria for awards, reporting, and evaluation. Grant program launches awards begin on or before Jan. 1, 2030.
§9-1751	39	Reimbursement to MRFs for unredeemed containers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning January 1, 2029, and until reimbursements from the EPR for Packaging bill are launched, the Stewardship Organization shall pay material recovery facilities to cover the costs of collecting, sorting, processing, and transporting empty unredeemed redeemable beverage containers. The eligibility criteria for the material recovery facility to receive payments are described. MDE may adjust the payment amount to account for changes in the costs of collecting, sorting, processing, and transporting empty unredeemed redeemable containers.
§9-1752	40	Other duties of MDE	In addition to what is described elsewhere in the bill, MDE shall: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish convenience standards for the coverage and availability of redemption options across the state; and ensure that they provide accessible options for differently abled people, those in rural areas low-income communities of color; Establish a system for large on-premises sellers to verify the source of high volumes of redeemable beverage containers; and Periodically review available beverage container redemption and processing methods to determine whether the types of beverage containers covered under the program should be expanded.
§9-1753	41	Beverage Container Recycling Refund Advisory Council	The Redeemable Beverage Container Recycling Refund Advisory Council, is responsible for: (1) Advising MDE on approval of a Beverage Container Stewardship Plan; (2) Making recommendations to MDE on implementation of the approved Plans; (3) Reviewing and advising MDE on the annual reports; and (4) Advising MDE on the implementation, administration, and performance of the program. The composition of the Advisory Council is described.
§9-1754	43	Regulations	Requires MDE to adopt regulations on/before June 1, 2027. Authorizes MDE to expand the types of covered beverage containers by regulation if, based on its review, it determines there are convenient redemption options for them.
§9-1755	43	Infractions, penalties, enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Enforcement</u> is provided per §§9-334 through §9-344 of this title (in addition to these additional provisions. <u>Written notice</u> – A penalty may not be imposed on a producer for failing to register or to identify each brand of redeemable beverage container unless MDE first issued written notice and the producer hasn't complied within 90 days after the notice. <u>Fraud</u> – A person may not redeem, attempt to redeem (etc) <i>with intent to defraud</i>, a container sold in another state, one rejected from redemption, line breakage, previously redeemed container, another ineligible material. Redeemed beverage containers may not be disposed in a landfill or incinerator. Penalties will be established by MDE based on the number of beverage containers & refund amounts involved

Section	Page	Subject	Summary of Content
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative penalties for failure to reach targets. Beginning January 1, 2032, if the Stewardship Organization falls short of redemption rate targets two successive years, a penalty of the prevailing deposit level at the time of the infraction times the number of containers short of the target. • Penalties will be transferred to the special account of the Recycling Trust Fund to be used only for MDE’s costs of planning, implementing, administering (etc) the program.
§9-1756	45	Immunity from State antitrust laws	Grants immunity to any person participating in a stewardship plan in compliance with this subtitle from liability under state law relating to antitrust and restraint of trade for any activities arising from collection, transport, processing, recycling, reuse, and management of beverage containers.
Section 2	45	MDE consultation with local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDE must consult with counties and municipalities to assess the impacts of the program on local beverage container litter and recycling operations and county and municipal budgets • On or before June 1, 2027, MDE shall report to the General Assembly recommendations to offset adverse impacts and enhance positive impacts of the program on beverage container litter, recycling rates, and local government budgets.
Section 3	45	Effective-ness date	June 1, 2026

1/23/2026

2026-2-10 Senate Bottle Bill Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Bente Cooney

Position: FAV



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
Bente@plasticfreeqac.org

*After a storm at Oyster Cove,
Grasonville by Marshy Creek,
Chesapeake*



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

SB 342 Maryland Bottle Bill.pdf

Uploaded by: Bruce Davis

Position: FAV



The Earth Ministry
River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation
6301 River Road
Bethesda MD 20817
RRUUCEarthMinistry@gmail.com

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Testimony on: SB 342
Position: Favorable
Hearing date: February 10, 2026

The Earth Ministry of River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Bethesda MD strongly supports The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, commonly known as the Maryland Bottle Bill. It seeks to reduce pollution from glass, metal and plastic beverage containers and to boost recycling. Plastic bottles are what most concern us.

Our members hear the steady drumbeat of alarming news about microplastic pollution from plastic bottles and other plastic. Beverage containers made from plastic are the fastest growing category in this bill. World-wide, a million plastic bottles are purchased every minute, the UN Environment Program said— back in 2018. In the US, plastic water bottle sales increased from 3 billion in 1997 to 86 billion in 2021, a 25-fold increase. Of those, just 29% were recycled.¹ In Maryland, this bill would capture an additional 2.3 billion plastic bottles a year² which currently end up in landfills, incinerators or littered. The bill will also capture plastic bottles used for soda, juices, milk and more.

Plastic does not decompose and return to nature. Over time it just breaks down into ever smaller pieces called micro- and nanoplastics. A warming planet accelerates the breakdown, making microplastics more persistent, more mobile and more hazardous.³ And the past three years have been the hottest on record. Microplastics are now found throughout our air, land and water, the animal kingdom and our own bodies and internal organs. Our Unitarian Universalist faith specifically directs us to “respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

Some of our members have viewed *Plastic People*, an award-winning 2024 feature-length documentary about the growing threat of microplastics on human health. One such threat is cardiac. A study in the March 4, 2024, *New England Journal of Medicine* looked at carotid artery plaque from 257 patients and found that 58% contained plastic. Over the next three years, patients with plastic had twice as many heart attacks, strokes or death from any cause.

The pace of bad news picked up last year. “Plastics cause disease and death from infancy to old age and are responsible for health-related economic losses exceeding \$1.5 billion [worldwide],” *Lancet* medical magazine reported in August 2025. And a study of brain tissue

¹ Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Market Data Analysis, based on 2021 data.

² Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter. Beverage Container Recycling Litter Reduction Coalition Fact Sheet.

³ phys.org/news/2025-11-plastic-pollution-worsened-climate-stemmed.html

from cadavers found plastics in all of them. But those who had died with dementia had three to five times higher concentrations, says a study in Nature Magazine, February 2025.

“The year has been full of scary details about the tiny particles...for many scientists, 2025 was the year of microplastics,” The Washington Post reported this January 4. Meanwhile, seven state governors called on EPA to launch nationwide monitoring of plastic particles in drinking water last December.

Not surprisingly, entrepreneurs are now marketing low-cost consumer test kits to check for plastic in food and water. And anxious consumers are turning to unproven therapies to remove microplastics from their bodies, a front-page article in the October 19, 2025 Washington Post reports. Therapies include injectable drugs, supplements and blood filtration. Filtration treatments can cost upwards of \$10,000 and take 2-3 hours.

Bottle bills are a *proven* way to reduce dangerous plastic pollution by recycling plastic, glass and metal beverage containers. For more than 50 years, bottle laws have achieved recycling rates up to three times higher than recycling rates in states without bottle laws⁴. And the higher the deposit, the higher the recycling rates. States with a 10-cent deposit have achieved container recycling rates of 90%. Our rate in Maryland is just 25%. And 90% of Maryland voters would support a bottle deposit/return system, according to a Gonzales Research and Media Services poll last year.

Broadly speaking, this bill will remove beverage containers from Maryland’s lawns, streets, highways, parking lots, beaches, bays, rivers and streams. It will improve water quality and save taxpayers and local governments money because producers will shoulder the cost of recycling their beverage containers. And these recycled containers will be cleaner than ones collected in recycling bins. They will be clean enough to recycle into new food and beverage containers, providing additional economic and environmental savings.

Best of all, by keeping plastic bottles out of the environment in the first place, this bill will be a vital step toward addressing the growing health challenges of microplastic pollution. For these reasons, the Earth Ministry of the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation requests a favorable report on SB 342.

Nancy Koran
4960 Fairmont Ave. 1001
Bethesda, MD 20814
nancykoran@hotmail.com
Member, Earth Ministry

⁴ Susan Collins, President, Container Recycling Institute, February 14, 2025 testimony on Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

Beverage Container Bill - Senate 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Carrie Myers

Position: FAV



THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK MARYLAND

February 5, 2026 | WEST POTOMAC STREET · BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND 21716 · (301) 834-7500

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair

The City of Brunswick urges you to support SB342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would add a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit Stewardship Organization, not by the City or its residents. The Maryland Department of the Environment will provide strong oversight.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it would capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, diverting an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing pollution from littered plastic bottles that break down in the environment and get washed into the Chesapeake Bay. Recent polling has found that more than 90% of Maryland's voting public would support the Bottle Bill.

This program would benefit our residents by reducing unsightly litter, increasing recycling, and reducing the amount of municipal solid waste that the City must collect and process. The City would not be required to implement or enforce the program but has the option to set up its own redemption center and receive a handling fee per container to finance it, paid for by the Stewardship Organization.

On behalf of the Council of Brunswick, I urge you to support SB342, to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, provide cleaner parks and waterways, and create savings for municipalities and local taxpayers.

Sincerely,


Nathan Brown, Mayor

LWVMD - SB 342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recyc

Uploaded by: Casey Hunter

Position: FAV



Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB 342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

POSITION: Support

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: February 10, 2026

Since the emergence of the environment movement in the 1970's, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes in expanding reuse and recycling efforts, and is an active proponent of national and state-level beverage container deposit programs.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports SB 342**, which would establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, a beverage container deposit program to increase recycling and reduce litter pollution. Under this program, Marylanders would receive a refund for each beverage container they return for recycling.

Recycling refund programs are proven to boost recycling rates and reduce litter. These programs also work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as they reduce the demand for virgin plastic production. Plastic products are made using fossil fuels – which have been proven to be a leading driver of the climate crisis. Maryland has established goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2031 and reach net-zero by 2045. **SB 342** would help the state achieve these goals by reducing our reliance on virgin plastic production.

SB 342 would benefit the environment, and benefit all Marylanders. Expanding Maryland's recycling efforts is critical in order to protect the health of our communities, maintain the quality of our environment, and mitigate the climate crisis.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland and our 2,000 members **strongly urge a favorable report on SB 342.**

SB0342_Beverage_Container_and_Litter_Reduction_Pro

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0342

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Bill Sponsor: Senator Brooks

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0342 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill, if enacted, creates the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund Program, beginning operation in January 2029. It will require -

- A small deposit added to the price of glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers (10¢-15¢)
- A refund of the deposit when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling

Performance targets for the program are as follows:

- a 70% redemption rate by December 31, 2030
- a 90% redemption rate by December 31, 2033
- by December 31, 2028, attainment of all convenience standards
- by December 31, 2038, at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in the state are returned and refilled

The program is implemented and financed by beverage producers and will have enforceable targets and strong oversight from Maryland Department of the Environment. It is expected that Maryland can recover $\geq 90\%$ of beverage containers with 3.5 billion fewer wasted containers/year as well as an overall reduction in litter and reduced costs to local governments. Additionally, it incentivizes investment in refillable beverage containers and increases availability of high-quality, food-grade materials.

This is clearly a direction that we should be going in. Our members support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

SB342- (Support) Maryland Beverage Container Recyc

Uploaded by: Christa Peters-Lidard

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support/Opposition of SB342
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Senate Energy, Education and Environment Committee Hearing 2/10/2026 at 1:00 p.m.
Submitted on 2/6/2026 by 3:00pm

To Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

My name is Christa Peters-Lidard, Ph.D. I live in Grasonville, on Greenwood Creek within the Prospect Bay/Eastern Bay watershed, and I urge a favorable report on SB342.

This Bill will:

- Establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce the litter, pollution, and costs associated with beverage containers;
- Prohibit a producer from selling, offering for sale, or distributing in or importing into the State a redeemable beverage container unless the producer is registered with the Department of the Environment, pays a certain fee, and is part of a beverage container stewardship organization;

I support this bill because it is a priority for Maryland's Community Campaign for the Environment (CCE). As an Earth scientist and a waterfront homeowner, the health of our environment is a top priority. From supporting outdoor recreation to avoiding tire punctures, recycling benefits all Maryland citizens. I treasure my ability to fish, swim, crab, boat, and harvest oysters on my creek and throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and by reducing litter and incentivizing recycling, the health of the Bay and all of Maryland's lands and waters will be preserved for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give **SB342** a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,
Christa Peters-Lidard
316 Prospect Bay Dr E
Grasonville, MD 21638

** Occasionally testimony is needed in committees other than the Energy, Education, and Environment Committee. Please always double check the Committee the hearing will be held within. Visit: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb site/Committees/Charts> to note correct committee chairs and salutations.

SB 342 written testimony from Anacostia Watershed

Uploaded by: Christopher Williams

Position: FAV



Testimony of
Christopher E. Williams, President and CEO,
Anacostia Watershed Society
to the
Maryland Senate
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
In support of SB 0342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling
Refund and Litter Reduction Program
February 10, 2026

Good afternoon. I am testifying today on behalf of the over 10,000 members, supporters and volunteers of the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) in strong support of SB 0342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. The Anacostia watershed is a 176 square mile area drained by the Anacostia River, two-thirds of which is in Prince George's and Montgomery counties in Maryland. Founded in 1989, AWS is a small organization of activists, advocates, experts, and educators working to conserve and restore the Anacostia watershed for all who live here and for future generations. Moreover, AWS is hundreds of volunteers from Maryland and DC in the field almost every day, picking up trash, monitoring pollution, planting trees and wetland plants, propagating wildlife, and removing invasive species. We are thousands of young students, learning about the natural history and ecology of the watershed. We are scores of naturalists-in-training, preparing to be conservation leaders in Maryland and DC communities. We are neighbors and friends in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, brought together by a shared love for our local watershed and a common determination to see it restored to health.

AWS has long experience battling trash pollution in the Anacostia watershed. In addition to regular volunteer trash clean-ups across the region, AWS advocacy efforts have been instrumental in the establishment of local limitations or bans of Styrofoam containers, single use plastic bags, plastic straws, and plastic utensils, all of which were tremendous sources of trash pollution that have since been visibly reduced, in some cases dramatically.¹

Of all the threats to river health that plague the Anacostia watershed – sewage overflows, toxic pollutants, urban run-off, sedimentation, wetlands and forest loss – the most starkly visible is

¹ For example, a recent study by AWS determined that occurrence of Styrofoam in Anacostia watershed trash traps has plummeted by over 75 percent since the prohibition of Styrofoam containers in DC, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County.

trash. After a heavy rain, tens of thousands of pounds of trash flows from streets, parking lots, and storm drains into streams and wetlands across the watershed and ultimately into the river's mainstem. Visitors to the river see the result: every eddy and small inlet cluttered with food wrappers, chip bags, single use plastic cups and lids, straws, and aluminum, glass, and plastic single-use beverage containers. Of all the trash collected by AWS trash traps, which are designed to intercept garbage flowing into the river, by far the most ubiquitous piece is the plastic beverage bottle. This trash fouls habitat, interfering with foraging, feeding, and other behaviors, and is sometimes ingested by wildlife. Moreover, the data suggest that over 70% of the pieces of trash flushed into the river will ultimately sink beneath the surface, raising troubling questions about just how much plastic waste is accumulating on the riverbed and in the water column, and how much that unseen trash is affecting the fish, wildlife and plants of the Anacostia River ecosystem.



A great blue heron finds itself on an island of trash. Wildlife struggling amidst trash is an all too common sight on rivers and streams in Maryland. Note the preponderance of plastic bottles.

In addition, plastic bottles and other trash foul natural areas important to people. The Anacostia watershed is entirely urban and suburban, and many of the parks and green spaces in Prince George's and Montgomery County are along streams and creeks in the watershed. These spaces foster social interaction, exercise, play, and provide places to get away from the noise and bustle of the city.

There is a growing body of evidence that access to urban green spaces is vitally important to our mental, physical, social, and emotional health.² Specific benefits include a higher reported quality of life, lower stress, better mood, and a reduction in mental distress. However, the benefits of urban green space are diminished if the green space itself is stressful or unpleasant to be in. Visible litter makes the environment less inviting, and reduces these benefits.

As the plastic trash decomposes, microscopic pieces are chipped off. These microplastics and nano-plastics persist in the environment for many years, and we are only beginning to learn about their potential negative impacts. For example, a study on the impact of microplastics on fish found damaged digestive and reproductive systems, and an increased chance of mortality.³ Freshwater mussels, organisms essential to the health of the Anacostia watershed, can also be highly impacted by microplastics. Several studies from other watersheds have found that mussels exposed to microplastics suffer from reduced reproductive success, which reduces the resilience of mussel populations facing the many other challenges of living in an urban river.⁴ In other words, microplastics can have cascading health effects for the organisms and populations exposed to them including, potentially, humans. In fact, studies show that humans are ingesting more and more plastic, with recent evidence suggesting that we are constantly taking in significant amounts of micro- and nano-plastics as we breathe, as we drink, as we eat, and that material is swiftly accumulating in our tissues.⁵

Five point five billion single use beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year.⁶ That is an average of over 15 million plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass bottles purchased, used, and disposed of every day. However, despite curbside pick-up, **less than a quarter of all that trash is actually captured for recycling.** The rest, over 4 billion otherwise recyclable containers, never get into the recycling stream. That is roughly 2 bottles and cans per each of Maryland's 6.2 million residents per day, every day, going to rapidly filling, often leaking landfills; to incinerators to be burned into toxic air pollution; or into our neighborhood streets, parks, and rivers.

In AWS's corner of Maryland, our dedicated volunteers have since 1989 removed on average about 42 tons of trash per year from the streams and wetlands of the Anacostia. Today, almost 60% of that trash by weight is plastic bottles. We're proud of our clean-up efforts, but we can

² Numerous studies support this conclusion. See <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-021-10474-7/tables/2>

³ Buyun. Md Simul, *Effects of Microplastics on Fish and Human Health*, *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, vol. 10, March 2022

⁴ Scherer, Christian et al, *Interactions of Microplastics with Freshwater Biota*, *The Handbook of Environmental Chemistry* vol. 58

⁵ Kieran D. Cox, Garth A. Covernton, Hailey L. Davies, John F. Dower, Francis Juanes, Sarah E. Dudas, *Human Consumption of Microplastics*, *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 2019, 53, 12, 7068–7074, June 5, 2019; *Dietary and inhalation exposure to nano- and microplastic particles and potential implications for human health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2022

⁶ Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Marketing Data, 2019

only round up a small fraction of the millions of beverage containers that foul the watershed so thoroughly that it is one of only three bodies of water in the U.S. that must be regulated for trash under the federal Clean Water Act (TMDL).



The result of a volunteer clean-up on a stream in the Anacostia watershed on April 22, 2023. The transparent bags are recyclable bottles and cans. The black bags contain all other trash collected. This ratio (about 60-70% recyclables) is typical.

We are facing not just a “litter problem” in Maryland. This is an environmental and impending public health crisis that needs to be forcefully addressed without delay. The type of deposit/return/recycle system laid out in SB 0342 has dramatically increased recycling rates in 10 U.S. states and across Europe. In fact, it has been demonstrated that return/recycle incentive systems work hand in hand and indeed are a necessary part of Extended Producer Responsibility programs. As stated above, in Maryland less than 25% of recyclable beverage containers are captured for recycling; in deposit/return states, that figure is 70% and higher, sometimes much higher. And we have decades of data to demonstrate these systems reduce pollution and are remarkably cost effective.

AWS believes that SB 0342 will significantly reduce litter and plastic pollution in the Anacostia and in all of Maryland’s rivers and streams. Data from other jurisdictions that have implemented such programs are encouraging. In 6 of the 10 states with deposit/refund laws in

place, researchers have examined the impact of the program on litter found on highways. These states— Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Vermont, and New York— have seen a 40-80% decrease in container litter, which contributed to 10-39% reductions in total litter.⁷

Data specifically from river cleanups in Massachusetts, another deposit/refund state, suggest that their program has a substantial impact on the amount of litter in rivers, streams, and wetlands. In Massachusetts, only containers holding carbonated drinks (beer, malt, carbonated soft drinks) and mineral water are eligible to be returned. Beverage market share data showed that deposit eligible containers made up 76% of sales, and non-deposit eligible containers were 24% of sales. Yet, data collected from river clean-ups revealed that deposit eligible containers made up only 19% of the containers collected and non-deposit containers made up 81%. This evidence strongly suggests that the incentive provided by the deposit/refund program in Massachusetts routed the bulk of eligible beverage containers to reuse and recycling, while containers with no such incentive littered the riverbanks.⁸

The proven benefits of deposit/return systems like SB 0342 include:

- A dramatically increased beverage container recycling rate in Maryland. The estimated recycling rate, currently only 25% of containers sold in the state, would increase to more than 90% with SB 0342.⁹
- Reduced beverage container litter and plastic pollution and an increase in water quality. The system would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, keeping that trash out of our neighborhoods, streets, parks, and rivers.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions. By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 50,371 cars.
- Savings money for taxpayers and local governments. SB 0342 would require beverage producers to finance the costs of collection, processing, and recycling of beverage containers, diverting those materials from landfills and incinerators and saving costs for taxpayers and local governments.
- New job opportunities in collection, redemption, hauling, and processing recyclable material. In fact, recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times more jobs as landfilling or incineration.

⁷ Schuyler, Qamar et al, *Economic incentives reduce plastic inputs to the ocean*, Marine Policy, vol. 96, pp 250-255

⁸ Cohen, Russ, Worcester Earth Day Cleanup, April 2003; Cohen, Russ, Blackstone Valley Riverways Clean Up Day, October 2007, Massachusetts Riverways Program. See bottlebill.org

⁹ This is the target expressed in HB 0232, and it is achievable. Among the ten U.S states with bottle bills, recycling rates today range as high as 87%. See <https://www.tomra.com/reverse-vending/media-center/feature-articles/bottle-bill-states-and-how-they-work>



Reverse vending machines that collect bottles and cans and facilitate deposit refunds will help consumers obtain refunds conveniently, safely, and with no unsanitary clutter that concerns some retailers.

In contrast, today you will hear several arguments repeatedly from the bill's opponents, and while those arguments should not be dismissed out of hand, they should be subjected to scrutiny based not on speculation and anecdote, but rather on hard evidence. When that happens, opponents' arguments evaporate. For example:

- **Claim:** *SB 0342 would place a tax on beverages. In fact*, the bill provides for a deposit on each bottle and can, which is refunded when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption center. This creates a powerful, proven incentive for recycling.
- **Claim:** *Deposit/return/refund schemes like the one proposed in SB 0342 raise the price of beverages. In fact*, there is no evidence in any bottle bill state that deposit/return systems raise prices.
- **Claim:** *Deposit/return systems are vulnerable to fraud from residents of non-deposit states bringing bottles for redemption on bottle bill states. In fact*, this has not emerged as a chronic problem in bottle bill states, and in the rare instances where it has taken place, prosecutions and investments in fraud prevention are under way.
- **Claim:** *Existing curbside recycling is effective, and a bottle bill is redundant and not needed. In fact*, recycling rates of waste picked up curbside are abysmal, and rates increase dramatically when bottle bill schemes are put in place.¹⁰

¹⁰ Litter studies in bottle bill states, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/benefits-of-bottle-bills/litter-studies-in-bottle-bill-states> .

- **Claim:** *Bottle bills adversely and disproportionately impact small businesses. In fact, SB 0342 provides exemptions from its requirements for small businesses including stores, restaurants, and beverage makers. In addition, the bill calls for use of reverse vending machines and other systems that will facilitate refunds and avoid unsanitary clutter that concerns some retailers.*

There is no reason to delay and every reason to get a deposit/return system in place in Maryland as soon as possible. AWS strongly supports SB 0342, and we urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to favorably report out the bill.



A marsh in the Anacostia watershed choked with plastic bottles.

SB342_IndivisibleHoCoMD_FAV_Konny.pdf

Uploaded by: Crystal Konny

Position: FAV



**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.

Crystal Konny
11605 Dark Fire Way
Columbia, MD 21044

Carrington 2026 Greenbelt SB342 Bottle Bill Testim

Uploaded by: Darrell Carrington

Position: FAV



GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL

Emmett V. Jordan, *Mayor*

Kristen L.K. Weaver, *Mayor Pro Tem*

Frankie Santos Fritz

Amy Knesel

Danielle P. McKinney

Jenni Pompei

Silke I. Pope

SENATE BILL 342
MARYLAND BEVERAGE CONTAINER RECYCLING REFUND AND LITTER REDUCTION
PROGRAM
POSITION: FAVORABLE
SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The City of Greenbelt strongly supports Senate Bill 342.

Greenbelt is a community that takes environmental stewardship seriously, and we see the direct, day to day impacts of beverage container litter in our neighborhoods, along roadways, in streams, and throughout our parks. These impacts are not abstract. They translate into higher cleanup costs, increased pressure on public works and parks staff, and avoidable pollution that undermines local stormwater, watershed, and sustainability efforts.

Senate Bill 342 establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase recycling and reuse, reduce litter, and shift the burden of managing beverage container waste away from local governments and taxpayers. For Greenbelt, this type of upstream policy is essential. When the State creates a consistent system that incentivizes redemption and increases recovery rates, municipalities spend less time and fewer resources collecting the same waste repeatedly and can instead direct limited funding toward core community services.

Beverage containers are among the most common forms of litter encountered by municipal maintenance crews. A deposit and refund system has been proven in other states to significantly increase recycling rates while dramatically reducing litter. For a city like Greenbelt, this translates into cleaner parks and neighborhoods, reduced strain on stormwater infrastructure, and measurable savings in local operational costs.

The bill also takes an important step toward aligning responsibility with the producers and distributors that place beverage containers into the marketplace. Local governments currently shoulder the financial and operational burden of litter abatement and recycling contamination. This legislation moves Maryland toward a more equitable and effective system.

For these reasons, the City of Greenbelt respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 342.

For more information, please contact City Manager Josué Salmerón at 301-474-8000 or jsalmeron@greenbeltmd.gov.

Testimony for SB 0342.pdf

Uploaded by: Debbie Gousha

Position: FAV

Testimony for SB 0342
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction
Program
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

My name is Debbie Gousha and I am writing to express my strong support for SB 0342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. This program if enacted institutes a beverage container deposit program that would create a 10 to 15 cent refundable deposit on glass, metal, and plastic beverage containers. The deposit would be refunded to the customer when the container is returned for recycling.

The cost for this program would be financed by the beverage producers and would save money for local governments who have been forced to bear the costs of recycling, landfilling, or incinerating the increasing number of non-refundable beverage containers.

“Bottle bills,” have proven to be very successful in reducing litter in other states that have adopted these policies to recover used beverage containers. Currently only 25% of containers sold in the state are recycled, but it is estimated that by adopting this policy Maryland could increase this rate to over 90%.

Please support this common-sense approach to reduce litter and save money for taxpayers and our local governments!

SB 342 bottle bill testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Dorie Broadman

Position: FAV



Promoting native landscapes through education,
advocacy and collaborative action.
Contact: wildonesnationscapital@gmail.com

Testimony: SB 342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

Committee: Energy, Education and Environment

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Brian Feldman; Vice Chair, Cheryl Kagan; and Honorable Members of the Committee

Wild Ones Nation's Capital Region, a 250-member chapter of the national organization "Wild Ones" urges your support for this bill. There is a critical need to substantially reduce environmentally damaging litter in natural places, including litter from beverage containers.

In a year when budget issues are paramount, it is important to note that this bill is self-funded. There will be little to no cost to the State budget. Container refund programs, like the one proposed in this bill, have been operating successfully for decades in ten (10) other states, (also Canada, Australia and throughout Europe) and have increased recycling rates substantially.¹

There is an enormous amount of litter causing harm to ecosystems across Maryland. Litter obstructs natural processes by contaminating soil and ground water, blocking sunlight, and creating death traps for wildlife. Plant and animal growth are harmed by microplastics as the small particles obstruct absorption of nutrients and water.² Litter also threatens "marine life, the food chain, human health, and the delicate balance of our planet's aquatic environments."³

Since there is no incentive not to litter, some people do it freely and the damage is significant. Providing financial incentives is the only viable remedy. According to a nonpartisan study, when the redemption amount is 10 cents, recycling rates rise to 90% and when it is 5 cents, the rate increases to 75%.⁴

Due to the great need to reduce this damaging litter, please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Broadman
Director, Legislative Affairs

Pru Foster
President

¹ <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/benefits-of-bottle-bills/bottle-bills-promote-recycling-and-reduce-waste>

² <https://one-more-tree.org/blog/2024/11/01/why-is-litter-in-forests-a-serious-problem-for-the-environment/>, section titled, "Release of microplastics into the environment:".

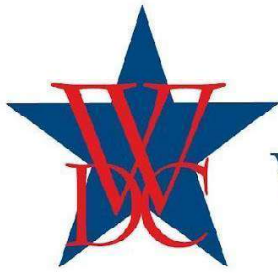
³ <https://www.unep.org/topics/ocean-seas-and-coasts/ecosystem-degradation-pollution/plastic-pollution-marine-litter>, first paragraph titled, "About".

⁴ https://abell.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CD-Deposit_Program_Analysis-312.pdf, page 5, section titled, "The paradox of revenue generation".

WDC testimony 2026 - Bottle Bill SB0342 final.pdf

Uploaded by: Elisabeth Fidler

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**Senate Bill SB0342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund
and Litter Reduction Program**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – February 10, 2026
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of budget neutral bill **SB0342**. This bill would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, and will achieve at least a 90% redemption rate, compared to the current average 25% recycling rate of containers.

Currently over 75% of our beverage containers end up in our environment where littered plastic beverage containers break down into small plastic particles -- microplastics and nanoplastics. We are all concerned about our health and our children's health, as every month we see more and more research and news articles written on the health impacts of the plastic pollution in our environment. We strongly support the bill SB0342 as the best solution to resolve the plastic litter problem, it is budget neutral and it will save money for local municipalities who currently spend their resources to clean up litter.

A recent poll¹ found overwhelming public support for the Maryland Bottle Bill: 91% of registered voters would support a program with refundable deposit, funded by beverage producers, not taxpayers. MDE's EPR program would not resolve the plastic litter on our roadways and in our environment. It would be beneficial for Maryland to implement both the beverage container deposit program and the EPR program, as many other jurisdictions have done². Every year we wait, another four billion beverage containers enter our environment. We need to act now.

We ask for your support for SB0342 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report. Thank you for your consideration!

Cynthia Rubenstein
WDC President

Elisabeth Liisi Fidler
WDC Subcommittee on
Environment and Energy

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair

¹ "Maryland Voters Express Overwhelming Support for a Beverage Container Deposit Program to Reduce Litter and Plastic Pollution, New Poll Shows" - Sierra Club Maryland Chapter - January 22, 2025 <https://bit.ly/3ZGHOj4>

² "The Status of EPR-PPP and DRS Around the World" May 2025, Container Recycling Institute https://www.container-recycling.org/images/2025/CRI_EPR-DRS_Factsheet_May_21_2025.pdf

SB342_Green Towson Alliance_Hoffman_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Miller

Position: FAV



**SB342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Hearing: February 10, 2026
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Honorable Members of the Committee,

The Green Towson Alliance writes in support of SB342 which creates a self-funding program placing a ten cent deposit on beverage containers made of glass, metal or plastic which is refunded to consumers when containers are returned with a goal of a 90% redemption rate. This bill will increase recycling rates and greatly reduce the amount of beverage container litter in Maryland. Marylanders purchase more than 5.5 billion beverage containers each year and only about one quarter of those containers are recycled. That leaves more than four billion containers ending up in our waterways and on our land every year.

Each spring, the Green Towson Alliance partners with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore County to organize clean-ups of local streams to remove plastic litter and other trash. In 2024, clean-ups at just eleven sites produced 150 bags of trash with the most commonly found items being plastic bottles and other plastics. Due to plastic bag legislation in our area, we are finding much less plastic bag trash, but the volume of beverage containers and other plastics persists. This plastic trash, if not hand-collected and removed by volunteers, breaks down into microplastics which are consumed by fish and other wildlife moving up the food chain to eventually reach us.

The small deposit that is added to the purchase of beverage containers and refundable upon return of the bottle will act as a much-needed incentive for consumers to return these containers for their deposit instead of littering the environment. This is not a new idea and the ten states that have long-standing bottle bills have seen major reductions in beverage container litter (up to 84%) and large increases in recycling rates. Michigan and Oregon have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a ten cent deposit. What a difference to our waterways if 90% of beverage containers were to be recycled!

We ask for a favorable report on SB342 as an important step toward the goal of a greener, healthier Maryland for all.

Respectfully,
Kirsten Hoffman
Green Towson Alliance, Executive Committee
701 West Joppa Road Towson, Maryland 21204

The Green Towson Alliance unites Towson area environmentalists to create a greener, healthier and more beautiful community through collaboration and activism.

Bottle Bill 2026 Senate PSR.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Ryznar

Position: FAV



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB0342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 2/10 at 1pm

Dear Sen. Brian Feldman (Chair) and Sen. Cheryl Kagan (Vice-Chair):

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is a statewide evidence-based organization of nearly 900 physicians, other health professionals, and supporters that addresses the existential public health threats of nuclear weapons, climate change, and pollution, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial and social justice.

CPSR strongly supports [SB0342](#), a bill establishing a beverage container deposit program in the State of Maryland at no added cost to the State (and with savings to waste management costs for local municipalities). Every year, over 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland, and only 25% are recycled. As structured, the proposed program will increase the recycling rates to over 90%.

Because most of these beverage containers are made from plastic, this bill would recapture over 2 billion plastic bottles annually that would otherwise be trashed or littered, conferring public health benefits in three ways:

(1) By providing high-quality food-grade plastics for recycling, this bill will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and alleviate the burden of climate change-related illness.

Plastic bottles are made from fossil fuels. Due to exponential growth of plastics production, much of it in single-use plastics like beverage containers, the plastics industry accounts for a rising share of global carbon emissions (from 3.7% in 2015 to 5.3% in 2019).¹⁻³ If the plastic industry were a country, it would be the fifth most polluting country in the world. Most of the carbon emissions result from producing the building blocks needed for new (“virgin”) plastics.² Increasing recycling rates of plastics can offset virgin plastic production and is therefore an important strategy for mitigating plastics-related climate impacts.³ Indeed, this program would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing 50,371 cars from the road. Climate change-induced extreme weather events negatively impact human health. Heat waves increase the rates of heart attacks, strokes, preterm births, suicidal behavior, and interpersonal violence.⁴ Flood kill people during the event, and survivors experience adverse effects, including infections, respiratory problems, stillbirths, as well as anxiety, depression, and PTSD.⁵ Additional climate change-related health concerns include the spread of mosquito- or tick-borne disease.⁶ For example, Maryland has seen an increase in Lyme disease cases.

2) By recapturing littered and landfilled plastics, this bill will reduce environmental microplastic contamination and alleviate the burden from toxic exposures.

Littered or landfilled plastic bottles do not biodegrade. Instead, they break up into tiny fragments, called microplastics and nanoplastics (MNPs), which readily disperse in our air, water, and land and cause widespread environmental pollution.⁷ For example, oysters harvested from the Bay contain detectable amounts of microplastics.⁸ People then ingest or inhale MNPs through the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink.⁷ Studies have detected MNPs in most human organs tested, including the brain, heart, lungs, intestines, testicles, and placenta.^{7,9-10} Recent animal studies show that microplastic polymers cause inflammation in every tissue they end up in, disrupt the microbiome in the gut, and cause abnormal protein folding in the brain consistent with dementia.^{7,11-13} This research is still being developed. However, MNPs also contain plastics-related chemicals, many of which are endocrine disruptors. Decades of animal and human studies have implicated endocrine-disrupting chemicals in obesity, type 2 diabetes, preterm birth, decreased sperm count, early puberty in females, and neurodevelopmental conditions like ADHD, autism, and IQ loss.^{7,11,14-16} Health economists estimate the economic burden of these health issues to be substantial, costing the United States \$920.6 billion dollars in healthcare costs, disability, and premature death from just three plastics-related chemicals.⁷ Additionally, leading cancer researchers named microplastics and related chemicals as drivers of rising cancer rates in young adults.¹⁷

3) By keeping plastic bottles out of incinerators, this bill will reduce the burden of air pollution.

Bottles that are trashed can end up incinerated. Unfortunately, when plastic bottles are burned, they release harmful air pollutants that worsen heart disease, asthma, and COPD; they also increase the risk of learning and behavioral problems in children as well as dementia in adults.¹⁸ By keeping plastic bottles out of trash incinerators in Baltimore City and Montgomery County, the Bottle Bill will help improve those communities' health.

We therefore urge you to vote in favor of the Bottle Bill because it is a net win for the health of Marylanders.

Sincerely,

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

References:

1. OECD. *Global Plastics Outlook: Policy Scenarios to 2060*. OECD Publishing; 2022.
2. Karali N, Khanna N, Shah N. Climate impact of primary plastic production. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Publications. 2024. Available at <https://www.osti.gov/biblio/2336721>
3. Zheng J and Suh S. Strategies to reduce the global carbon footprint of plastics. *Nature Climate Change* 2019; 9: 374-378.
4. Bell ML, Gasparrini A, Benjamin GC. Climate change, extreme heat, and health. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2024; 390: 1793-1801.
5. Wu Y, Wen B, Gasevic D, *et al.* Climate change, floods, and human health. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2024; 391: 1949-1958.
6. Butler, Colin. "Climate change and human health: Primary, secondary, and tertiary effects." In: *Living with climate change* (Ed: T. Letcher). Elsevier: 2024.
7. Landrigan PJ, Raps H, Cropper M, *et al.* The Minderoo-Monaco commission on plastics and human health. *Annals of Global Health* 2023; 89(1): 23, 1–215.
8. Godiner J. "Rising microplastics endanger Chesapeake Bay oysters, human health." *Baltimore Sun* Nov 24, 2025. Available at: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/2025/11/24/rising-microplastics-endanger-chesapeake-bay-oysters-human-health/>
9. Amato-Lourenço LF, Dantas KC, Júnior GB, *et al.* Microplastics in the olfactory bulb of the human brain. *JAMA Network Open* 2024; 7(9): e2440018.
10. Campen M, Nihart A, Garcia M, *et al.* Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains assessed by pyrolysis gas chromatography-mass spectrometry. 2024 *Res Sq* [Preprint].
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12. Sofield CE, Anderton RS, Gorecki AM. Mind over microplastics: exploring microplastic-induced gut disruption and gut-brain-axis consequences. *Curr Issues Mol Biol.* 2024; 46(5):4186-4202.
13. Liu Z, Sokratian A, Duda AM, *et al.* Anionic nanoplastic contaminants promote Parkinson's disease-associated α -synuclein aggregation. *Science Advances* 2023; 9(46).
14. Khan LG, Philippat C, Nakayama S, *et al.* Endocrine-disrupting chemicals: implications for human health. *Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol* 2020; 8: 703-18.
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17. Mauri G, Patelli G, Sartore-Bianchi A, *et al.* Early-onset cancers: biological bases and clinical implications. *Cell Reports Medicine* 2024; 5: 101737.
18. Livingston G, Huntley J, Liu KY, *et al.* Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the *Lancet* standing Commission. *The Lancet* 2024; 404(10452): 572-628.

Testimony_SB0342_FAV_MFinch.pdf

Uploaded by: Erinn Camp Mansour

Position: FAV

FAV – SB342: MD Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Bill Title:

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (**SB342**, HB331)

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Date: February 6, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee,

My name is Molly Finch and I am a resident of Baltimore, home of the Trash Wheel family. The trash wheels of Baltimore were designed to capture litter flowing into the Baltimore Inner Harbor and out into the Patapsco River from smaller tributaries. All the litter that is captured is regularly counted to get a sense of what litter is coming into the Baltimore Inner Harbor.

Beverage bottle containers are one of the top types of litter that is collected by the Baltimore trash wheels. This means a large quantity of plastic bottles are not making to a trash or recycling can but have become litter and have made their way out to the river, heading to the Bay. This tells me our current trash and recycling system is not enough, and we need an alternative incentive to get bottles off that Baltimore trash wheel top litter list. **For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB346. Maryland needs a bottle bill!**

You can learn more about trash wheel data on the trash wheel website:

<https://www.mrtrashwheel.com/trash-interception>

Sincerely,

Molly Finch
District 40
Pigtown, Baltimore, MD
mgsfinch@gmail.com

SB0342 Support for Maryland Beverage Container Rec

Uploaded by: George Sewell

Position: FAV

Gayon M. Sampson
Chief of Staff

Allen W. Etzler, III
Deputy Chief of Staff



Michael C. O'Connor
Mayor

FREDERICK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Maryland State Senate
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Support for Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Bill Maryland SB0342**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee,

The City of Frederick offers support for the vision of the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program bill. Though City government operations are not likely to incur any costs to operate this program, it will benefit our residents by reducing litter, increasing recycling, and reducing the waste stream the city processes through its trash collection operations.

By encouraging reuse and recycling, the City hopes this will reduce the amount of litter on our roadways and in our streams and waterways. The City operates Adopt-a-Road and stream cleanup programs multiple times per year to reduce the litter before it reaches our downstream neighbors.

Concessions to allow our small businesses to either be exempted or more easily comply are also appreciated.

Overall, this is a positive step toward sustainability by improving the places we live, work, and play, including our waterways and wildlife habitats.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Connor

Support for Senate Bill SB0342.pdf

Uploaded by: Giselle Richards

Position: FAV



www.cheverly-md.gov

The Town of Cheverly
6401 Forest Road
Cheverly, MD 20785

Office/Fax: (301) 773-8360

January 30, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland Senate
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

Re:Support for Senate Bill 342 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

On behalf of the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Cheverly, we respectfully submit this letter in support of Senate Bill 342 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, the Senate companion to House Bill 331.

The Town of Cheverly is directly impacted by beverage container litter and plastic pollution. As a community located within the Anacostia watershed, discarded beverage containers regularly enter local streets, storm drains, and waterways, contributing to environmental degradation and increased cleanup demands on municipal resources.

Although recycling services are available, beverage containers continue to represent a significant portion of roadside and waterway litter. This results in higher costs for litter removal, disposal, and stormwater management, while negatively affecting neighborhood appearance and overall quality of life for residents.

Senate Bill 342 offers a proven and effective solution. Beverage container deposit programs in other states have consistently achieved recycling rates exceeding 90 percent, significantly reducing litter and increasing the recovery of high-quality recyclable materials. For municipalities like Cheverly, this program would lead to cleaner public spaces, improved water quality, and reduced strain on public works operations.

Equally important, the program would shift the financial responsibility for beverage container recycling from local governments to beverage producers, generating meaningful savings for taxpayers and allowing municipalities to focus limited resources on other essential services.

For these reasons, the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Cheverly strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 342. We appreciate your leadership and consideration of legislation that supports environmental protection, fiscal responsibility, and the well-being of Maryland's communities.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on environmental protection and sustainability for Maryland's communities.

Sincerely,



Micah Watson
Mayor, Town of Cheverly

On behalf of the
Cheverly Mayor and Town Council



SB 342 Healthy Climate MD and MdPHA FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Healthy Climate Maryland N/A

Position: FAV



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB0342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 2/10 at 1pm

Dear Sen. Brian Feldman (Chair) and Sen. Cheryl Kagan (Vice-Chair):

Healthy Climate Maryland (HCM) is a state-wide coalition of dedicated public health and medical professionals that seeks to address climate change and environmental challenges by focusing on their impacts on public health.

Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is Maryland's leading professional organization for those working in the field of public health. It is dedicated to increasing health equity for Marylanders through advocacy and community collaborations

HCM and MdPHA strongly support [SB0342](#), a bill establishing a beverage container deposit program in the State of Maryland at no added cost to the State (and with savings to waste management costs for local municipalities). Every year, over 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland, and only 25% are recycled. As structured, the proposed program will increase the recycling rates to over 90%.

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effects, including infections, respiratory problems, stillbirths, as well as anxiety, depression, and PTSD.⁵ Additional climate change-related health concerns include the spread of mosquito- or tick-borne disease.⁶ For example, Maryland has seen an increase in Lyme disease cases.

2) By recapturing littered and landfilled plastics, this bill will reduce environmental microplastic contamination and alleviate the burden from toxic exposures.

Littered or landfilled plastic bottles do not biodegrade. Instead, they break up into tiny fragments, called microplastics and nanoplastics (MNPs), which readily disperse in our air, water, and land and cause widespread environmental pollution.⁷ For example, oysters harvested from the Bay contain detectable amounts of microplastics.⁸ People then ingest or inhale MNPs through the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink.⁷ Studies have detected MNPs in most human organs tested, including the brain, heart, lungs, intestines, testicles, and placenta.^{7,9-10} Recent animal studies show that microplastic polymers cause inflammation in every tissue they end up in, disrupt the microbiome in the gut, and cause abnormal protein folding in the brain consistent with dementia.^{7,11-13} This research is still being developed. However, MNPs also contain plastics-related chemicals, many of which are endocrine disruptors. Decades of animal and human studies have implicated endocrine-disrupting chemicals in obesity, type 2 diabetes, preterm birth, decreased sperm count, early puberty in females, and neurodevelopmental conditions like ADHD, autism, and IQ loss.^{7,11,14-16} Health economists estimate the economic burden of these health issues to be substantial, costing the United States \$920.6 billion dollars in healthcare costs, disability, and premature death from just three plastics-related chemicals.⁷ Additionally, leading cancer researchers named microplastics and related chemicals as drivers of rising cancer rates in young adults.¹⁷

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Bottles that are trashed can end up incinerated. Unfortunately, when plastic bottles are burned, they release harmful air pollutants that worsen heart disease, asthma, and COPD; they also increase the risk of learning and behavioral problems in children as well as dementia in adults.¹⁸ By keeping plastic bottles out of trash incinerators in Baltimore City and Montgomery County, the Bottle Bill will help improve those communities' health.

We therefore urge you to vote in favor of the Bottle Bill because it is a net win for the health of Marylanders.

Sincerely,

Healthy Climate Maryland
Maryland Public Health Association

References:

1. OECD. *Global Plastics Outlook: Policy Scenarios to 2060*. OECD Publishing; 2022.
2. Karali N, Khanna N, Shah N. Climate impact of primary plastic production. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Publications. 2024. Available at <https://www.osti.gov/biblio/2336721>
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18. Livingston G, Huntley J, Liu KY, *et al.* Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the *Lancet* standing Commission. *The Lancet* 2024; 404(10452): 572-628.

Laurel for the Patuxent

Uploaded by: Hollis Hoglund

Position: FAV



Laurel for the Patuxent strongly supports the Beverage Container and Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, HB 232 (or SB346). The purpose of our organization is to promote the health of our Patuxent River watershed through a variety of environmental projects which include establishing native plant gardens, planting trees, environmental education and art, invasive plant removal, and sponsoring litter cleanups, all in the city of Laurel.

While engaging in these activities and just in general driving throughout our state, we are all aware of the amount of litter along the roadsides, a substantial portion of which are beverage containers. That is because only about 23% of beverage containers sold in the state are collected for recycling. The rest are left in the environment, most of which will eventually enter the river, the Bay and eventually the ocean. We know that a bottle redemption program, which has already proven effective in ten US states and numerous countries around the world, would successfully address this issue. Without this bottle return program, nothing will be done and the litter will just continue to pollute our waterways.

In addition to litter reduction, this program has many other advantages as enumerated in the fact sheet which has been distributed. As written, it would be self-financing - taxpayer funding would not be necessary so it is a win-win solution.

We look forward to the passage of HB232 into law this legislative session so that it becomes an important part of the effort our state continues to make in creating a cleaner, healthier Maryland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Coyle".

Jessica Coyle, President

Laurel for the Patuxent
329 Prince George St.
Laurel, MD 20707

Ches Bay Trust Testimony -SB342.pdf

Uploaded by: Jana Davis

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program Written Testimony

Date: February 10, 2026

Support

Submitted to: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Submitted by: Chesapeake Bay Trust

This legislation and the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust, a community-based, nonprofit grant-making organization established by the Maryland General Assembly, is named in this legislation as the administrator of the Beverage Container Recycling Refund Grant Program (Grant Program; section 9-1750). The Trust supports being tapped for this role. Given our ongoing grant-making work in the litter reduction/removal space, the Trust will be able to quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively establish the Grant Program.

Background:

The Trust recognizes that the primary goal of this legislation is not revenue generation, but instead reduction of litter and concentration of recyclable material through a program that encourages adoptable change in behavior of individual citizens, a tactic shown to be successful in many similar cases in the literature. The materials of focus in this legislation are some of the most common components of litter and are a primary component of trash that ends up in streams, rivers and ultimately the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays, as reported by our grantees who administer stream and river trash clean-up programs. With trash designated as a regulated pollutant under the “Trash TMDL” established for the Anacostia River and Baltimore Harbor, the reduction of trash has emerged as a requirement that local governments must address in their Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permits. Bottle deposits, as has been demonstrated in other states, reduce the improper disposal and generation of trash at the source, with individual consumers, and are known to be more cost-effective than downstream trash interception technologies, which are expensive to install, and labor-intensive trash pick-up efforts.

Use of Funds for Recycling, Community Cleanup Activities:

The Trust would allocate these funds to promote recycling, reduce reliance on single-use containers, reduce litter, and promote community clean up and greening projects. The work would be funded through competitive grant programs, the infrastructure of which already exists. We anticipate great interest in this work as well by members of the Thomas V. Mike Miller

Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps Program, established in 2010 by the General Assembly to engage youth in career development.

The Trust already issues grants for work in this arena: Many of the grants awarded by the Trust currently provide funds to local communities to conduct trash clean-up activities (downstream solutions) and change behaviors that lead to litter in the first place (upstream solutions). Clean-up projects supported by the Trust already remove 70,000 to 100,000 pounds of trash annually from neighborhoods and local waterways across Maryland. The goal is to put this element of our work out of business through the education/behavior change upstream element of our work enhanced through this bill.

With the funds generated under this legislation, the Trust would:

- Increase grant-making to community groups and schools for recycling local trash clean-up efforts;
- Increase support for public education programs about the importance of trash and litter reduction;
- Increase community-based natural resources work generally across the State, which creates jobs in local communities. Analysis of Trust grant-making indicates that approximately 60% of the grant funds are used to directly engage for-profit entities from suppliers to nurseries to landscape firms and more, supporting hundreds of jobs each year.

Trash issues are named as one of the most important environmental issues in many types of neighborhoods, but in predominantly low-income neighborhoods, making litter an environmental justice issue. Studies indicate that communities that are greener and cleaner experience greater human health, reduced crime, and greater economic vitality. The Trust would direct a significant portion of the resources to grants that aim to reduce trash in, green, and beautify urban communities.

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Trust was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1985 as a nonprofit grant-making organization with a goal to empower community-based groups to play a role in the restoration of the state's local rivers, streams, parks, and other natural resources in diverse communities across the state, from the mountains of Western Maryland and the Youghiogheny watershed to the marshes of the Coastal Bays. The goal was to create an entity that complements state agency work by empowering groups on the ground: schools, nonprofit organizations, faith-based and reach large institutions, homeowners associations, community and civic associations, and other types of groups.

The Trust is known for its efficiency, putting more than 90 cents of every dollar into programs. The Trust has awarded close to \$200m through 13,000 grants and projects in every county in Maryland. We now average about 500 grants and other awards a year and have about 1,000 active awardees at



any one time.

The Trust does not receive a direct state appropriation to support its operations, instead supported through revenue from the Chesapeake Bay vehicle license plate; half of the Chesapeake and Endangered Species Fund checkoff on the state income tax form; two new donation options through Maryland's online boating, fishing, hunting license system, one that focuses on veterans' rehabilitation; partnerships with federal, state, local agencies, family foundations, and corporate foundations; and individual donors.



Due to its efficiency, the Trust has been rated with the maximum four-star rating by the nation's leading charity evaluator, Charity Navigator, for more than two decades, putting it in the top 1% of non-profits in the nation.

One of the Trust's basic tenets in its strategic plan is to engage under-engaged audiences in natural resources issues. Every individual in our area benefits from healthy natural resources, and in turn, every individual can help natural resources.



JCR_SB0342_6Feb2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Janet Ruhl

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB0342/HB0331
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee 10 February 2026
Submitted on 06 February 2026 by 10:00 am

To the Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Janet Ruhl. I live in Galena, MD, on the Sassafras River, and I urge a **favorable** report on SB0342/HB0331. Thank you in advance for your consideration of support.

Single-use glass, plastic and metal beverage containers are often discarded as unsightly litter, buried in landfills or incinerated as garbage. These practices result in negative climate and health impacts at every stage – production of virgin materials, leaching toxic chemicals and breaking down into micro- and nano-plastics, extraction of fossil fuels, emission of greenhouse gases during degradation/incineration. The materials can be recycled, made into new containers, reducing the need for virgin materials. We must do more to reduce virgin glass, plastic and metal from being produced, used and discarded.

This bill requires that a small deposit is added to the price of beverages in glass, plastic, and metal beverage containers (10¢-15¢). The deposit is refunded when the containers are returned to a convenient retailer or redemption facility for recycling. The program is implemented and financed by beverage producers, w/ enforceable targets and strong oversight from MDE.

This Bill will:

- Provide Maryland consumers with incentives to return single-use glass, plastic and metal beverage containers instead of discarding these products in landfills or as roadside litter.
- Drive the market toward collecting, reusing and/or recycling glass, plastic and metal beverage containers.
- Reduce production of virgin glass, plastic and metal.

I **support** Bill SB0342/HB0331 requiring Deposits on Beverage Containers for multiple reasons. I lead and have led roadside and river trash removal efforts for decades. Amongst the main trash items are bottles and cans, items which should be recycled. Putting a financial incentive into returning bottles and cans to central collection points will not only decrease roadside litter but emphasizes the need to recycle this massive resource.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give SB0342/HB0331 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,
Janet C. Ruhl

2026 SB 342 testify SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Jerome Henger

Position: FAV

To the Honorable Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: Support SB 342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members:

This Aluminum Can

This can, this aluminum can has been on an incredible journey (hold up aluminum can to show the committee).

It might have ended up in your refrigerator; and we all appreciate a nice cold beverage on a hot summer day.

Fields, farmland and forests have been cleared to mine bauxite ore that is needed to produce aluminum.

After the ore is mined, it is transported to a processing facility and refined into aluminum.

By not recycling this aluminum can, we are throwing away all of this effort, this natural resource, and **money!**

Aluminum can be recycled an infinite number of times. It is one of the easiest metals to recycle.

SB 342 will provide a small economic incentive, a deposit, to encourage the recycling of aluminum cans and beverage containers.

The bill will help reduce litter, help to create a cleaner environment which includes our great Chesapeake Bay.

Let the journey of this aluminum can continue.

Earlier in the "speech" I had mentioned money.

Increasing the recycling rate will increase the supply of aluminum; and in most cases increasing the supply of a product or commodity will decrease the price (unless demand also increases).

There will be more aluminum that will be able to be used in manufacturing more cans, and many other products.

The next pages present some economic data and other information from the aluminum industry.

Sincerely,

Jerome Henger
District 41
423 Wingate Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21210

The following pages and information were taken from The Aluminum Association website.

The Aluminum Association
1400 Crystal Drive
Suite 430
Arlington, VA 22202
Phone: 703-358-2960
<https://www.aluminum.org>

Product Markets

Aluminum is all around us, making our everyday lives easier and more efficient. It's in all the usual places – in our aluminum foil, in the cars we drive and, in our soda, and beer cans. And aluminum is infinitely recyclable, lightweight yet strong and durable, energy efficient and sustainable.

But did you know that aluminum is also critical to many of our modern innovations?

Aluminum sent us to Mars, motors us to greater fuel- and cost-efficient vehicles, increases our buildings energy efficiency and facilitates our productivity through our iPads and laptops. Just to name a few – read on to find out all the innovative ways aluminum is the critical element to build our world.

Aircraft & Aerospace

From the Wright brothers' use of aluminum in their engine of their first biplane to NASA's use of an aluminum-lithium alloy in the Orion spacecraft—aluminum has created the potential for humans to fly both around the earth and into space.

Aluminum Cans

Aluminum cans are the infinitely recyclable and the most sustainable beverage package on the market. They chill quickly, provide a superior metal canvas to print on and, perhaps most important, protect the flavor and integrity of our favorite beverages.

Automotive

Aluminum offers the fastest, safest, most environmentally friendly and value-added way to increase vehicle performance, boost fuel efficiency, extend battery range and reduce emissions.

Building & Construction

Aluminum is recognized as one of the most energy efficient and sustainable construction materials. It's estimated that more than 60% of the aluminum used in buildings today comes from recycled material.

Electrical

Aluminum is the preferred material for electricity transmission and distribution uses. AA-8000 series aluminum alloy conductors have a great track record of 50 years of reliable field installations.

Electronics & Appliances

Home appliances and consumer technology—the washing machine, dryer, refrigerator and laptop—exist as they are today because of aluminum's light weight, structural strength and thermal characteristics.

Foil & Packaging

Foil's uses have grown over the past 100 years to a nearly endless count. From Christmas tree ornaments to spacecraft insulation, TV dinners to medicine packets—aluminum foil has improved both our products and our lives.

New & Innovative Markets

With aluminum in its second century of widespread use, new and innovative technologies continue to grow its market potential. Solar panel nanotechnology, aluminum-ion batteries and more will help open and grow new and innovative markets in the 21st century.

Aluminum Makes Jobs in

Maryland



Companies that make and sell aluminum are a key part of Maryland's economy

The aluminum industry is a key element of Maryland's manufacturing base. Companies that make and sell aluminum and aluminum products provide good-paying jobs throughout the State of Maryland. Strong, lightweight and recyclable, aluminum is a material uniquely suited to meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

Economic Impact of the Aluminum Industry in Maryland

	Direct	Supplier	Induced	Total
Jobs (FTE)	491	960	1,067	2,518
Wages	\$39,293,000	\$73,760,400	\$70,150,700	\$183,204,100
Economic Impact	\$237,738,400	\$241,307,200	\$284,074,100	\$763,119,700



The Aluminum Industry Generates 2,518 Jobs and \$763.12 million in Economic Impact in Maryland

The economic benefits of the aluminum industry are clear in Maryland, where the industry is directly responsible for a total of 491 jobs. In Maryland, the manufacturing and wholesaling operations of the aluminum industry are directly responsible for \$237.74 million in economic output. When indirect and induced jobs are considered, 2,518 employees in Maryland earn a total of \$183.20 million annually because of the contributions of the aluminum industry. Jobs supported by the aluminum industry are good jobs, paying an average of \$72,800 in wages and benefits in Maryland compared to a statewide average of \$70,200.



The Economic Benefits of the Industry Spread Throughout the State

Maryland is home to 2,027 jobs in firms supplying the aluminum industry or benefitting from the induced impact of the industry's expenditures. These jobs include equipment manufacturers, engineers, and truck drivers; among other occupations. When supplier and induced impacts are taken into account, the aluminum industry generates nearly \$763.12 million in economic activity in Maryland. The aluminum industry accounts for 0.18 percent of the state's Gross State Product.¹ All of this activity generates nearly \$25.93 million in state and local revenues and another \$30.01 million for the federal government.

¹ "Gross Domestic Product by State, 4th Quarter 2023 and Preliminary 2023, accessed March 2024. Available at <https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state>



Choose Aluminum for Green Jobs in Maryland



Infinately recyclable and uniquely sustainable, aluminum is the sustainable material of choice

Lightweight and strong, durable and infinitely recyclable, energy-saving aluminum is the sustainable material of choice. As we strive for a more energy-efficient future, aluminum continues to provide innovative solutions and competitive advantages for businesses and consumers.

Aluminum:

- * Makes cars and trucks more energy efficient without any compromise on safety or performance.
- * Makes beverage cans lighter, easier to ship and infinitely recyclable.
- * Makes more durable, longer-lasting buildings with material that is easily recycled at the end of life.
- * Supports a more circular and sustainable economy.

And aluminum made in North America today is less than half as carbon intensive as it was 30 years ago thanks to reliance on renewable hydropower in the region. U.S. aluminum helps innovators innovate -- making good products great and great products even better.



Aluminum Also Creates Jobs Throughout Maryland

	Direct	Supplier	Induced	Total
Jobs (FTE)	491	960	1,067	2,518
Wages	\$39,293,000	\$73,760,400	\$70,150,700	\$183,204,100
Economic Impact	\$237,738,400	\$241,307,200	\$284,074,100	\$763,119,700



Aluminum is a Major Part of the Economy in Maryland

The aluminum industry supports 491 jobs in Maryland. An additional 2,027 jobs are indirectly supported by the aluminum industry through suppliers and the induced impact of the industry's expenditures. These jobs include equipment manufacturers, engineers, and truck drivers, among other occupations. Together, these 2,518 employees earn a total of \$183.20 million annually.

In Maryland, the manufacturing and wholesaling operations of the aluminum industry are directly responsible for \$237.74 million in economic output. When supplier and induced impacts are taken into account, the aluminum industry generates nearly \$763.12 million in economic activity in the state. The aluminum industry accounts for 0.18 percent of Maryland's Gross State Product.

In Maryland, all of this activity generates nearly \$25.93 million in state and local revenues and another \$30.01 million for the federal government.

¹ Job estimates are based on data from public sources and company reporting and reflects a best estimate for March 2024.
² *Gross Domestic Product by State, 4th Quarter 2023 and Preliminary 2023, accessed March 2024. Available at: <https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state>



The Aluminum Association
The Economic Impact of the Industry
2024 Data
Maryland

DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT			
	Jobs¹	Wages	Output
Alumina refining/Primary aluminum	0	\$0	\$0
Secondary production/alloying	58	\$5,054,400	\$100,024,900
Sheet/Plate/Foil	60	\$4,652,700	\$16,240,300
Extrusions	37	\$4,702,600	\$21,562,400
Coatings	8	\$630,900	\$2,911,200
Foundries	177	\$9,823,000	\$40,942,500
Forgings	0	\$0	\$0
Metals service centers	151	\$14,429,400	\$56,057,100
Total	491	\$39,293,000	\$237,738,400

SUPPLIER ECONOMIC IMPACT			
	Jobs	Wages	Output
Agriculture	6	\$231,700	\$736,900
Mining	9	\$578,300	\$4,620,100
Construction	5	\$283,700	\$910,400
Manufacturing	192	\$17,255,200	\$81,304,400
Wholesale	68	\$6,303,200	\$16,637,300
Retail	5	\$207,100	\$494,700
Transportation & Communication	135	\$8,698,500	\$25,829,100
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	274	\$21,053,300	\$79,138,200
Business & Personal. Services	224	\$16,919,800	\$27,864,000
Travel & Entertainment	30	\$1,039,600	\$2,205,100
Government	12	\$1,190,000	\$1,567,000
Other	0	\$0	\$0
Total	960	\$73,760,400	\$241,307,200

INDUCED ECONOMIC IMPACT			
	Jobs	Wages	Output
Agriculture	28	\$861,800	\$5,222,600
Mining	1	\$40,900	\$579,800
Construction	5	\$267,500	\$743,700
Manufacturing	105	\$9,095,200	\$56,261,000
Wholesale	19	\$1,853,500	\$5,033,900
Retail	82	\$3,152,300	\$7,256,000
Transportation & Communication	54	\$4,030,300	\$11,356,100
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	379	\$29,008,400	\$165,115,100
Business & Personal Services	271	\$17,212,200	\$24,091,900
Travel & Entertainment	99	\$3,240,600	\$6,727,600
Government	7	\$594,500	\$906,700
Other	17	\$793,500	\$779,700
Total	1,067	\$70,150,700	\$284,074,100

	Jobs	Wages	Output
Total Economic Impact	2,518	\$183,204,100	\$763,119,700

TAX IMPACT	BUSINESS TAXES
Federal Taxes	\$30,014,100
State Taxes	\$25,927,600
Total Taxes	\$55,941,700

¹ Job estimates are based on data from public sources and company reporting and reflects a best estimate for March 2024.



The Aluminum Industry Creates Jobs in Maryland

Other aluminum rolling, drawing and extruding

Clendenin Brothers Inc
4309 Erdman Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21213-2601

Hydro Aluminum Metals USA
1500 Whetstone Way #103
Baltimore, MD 21230

Nonferrous metal foundries

Danko Arlington Inc
4800 E Wabash Ave
Baltimore, MD 21215

Caldwell Casting Co Inc
2 Washington St
Cambridge, MD 21613

C Palmer Die Casting Inc
97 Commerce Dr
Oakland, MD 21550-3955

Secondary smelting and alloying of aluminum

Eramet
610 Pittman Road
Baltimore, MD 21226-1788

Kawneer Company, Inc
7460 New Ridge Rd
Hanover, MD 21076-3801

Metal coating and nonprecious engraving

PHOENIX MECANO INC
7330 Executive Way
Frederick, MD 21704

Metal heat treating

Mac Machine Company
7209 Rutherford Rd
Windsor Mill, MD 21244

Value of Material

This KPI measures the dollar value per ton of aluminum can scrap. Aluminum cans help to make municipal recycling programs possible. Many such programs rely on re-selling recycled material to stay financially viable and the high value of aluminum in the recycling stream effectively subsidizes the recycling of less valuable materials in the bin. This measure indicates the relative importance of different types of beverage container to sustaining the financial viability of municipal recycling programs. The data is based on a two-year rolling average of relevant scrap commodity prices.

Americans on average throw away 15 twelve-packs of aluminum beverage cans every year – a nearly

\$1.2 billion loss.

This is bad for the economy, environment and national security.

An illustration on a blue background showing a white outline of a person standing next to a trash bin. The person is holding a can and is in the process of throwing it into the bin. A red 'X' is superimposed over the trash bin, indicating that the cans are being discarded as waste instead of recycled.

Closing the Can Recycling Loop

Each year, every American sends around 15 12-packs worth of aluminum beverage cans to landfills instead of the recycling bin on average. This is a massive loss to the economy, environment and national security. In fact, by recycling all the aluminum beverage cans that currently end up in U.S. landfills each year, we could save around \$1.2 billion for the economy and enough energy to power more than 2 million homes for a full year. The Aluminum Association is working on a number of fronts to grow aluminum can recycling in the United States today.

BottleBill26.pdf

Uploaded by: Jerry Burgess

Position: FAV



Friday, February 6, 2026

February 6, 2026

THE TOWN OF BRENTWOOD STRONGLY SUPPORT A MARYLAND BEVERAGE CONTAINER RECYCLING REFUND AND LITTER REDUCTION PROGRAM.

The Town of Brentwood urges you to support the 2026 legislative session HB 331/SB 342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

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 or landfilled. Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit. This legislation would reduce plastic pollution and litter, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create jobs through a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, depending on container size.

About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold annually in Maryland. yet only one in four is recycled. That means more than 4 billion bottles and cans are thrown away every year, piling up in landfills, spewing toxins in incinerators, or polluting our rivers and streams to threaten wildlife and contaminate drinking water. The Bottle Bill will dramatically increase recycling rates and decrease litter and pollution.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would add a refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit beverage container stewardship organization, not by the Town or its residents. The Maryland Department of the Environment would establish and oversee the organization with an advisory council providing support. This program would benefit our residents by incentivizing the recycling of plastics; reducing the amount of municipal solid waste that the county must collect and process; and redirecting litter from the Northwest

Branch of the Anacostia River, our parks, and our streets. It also directly supports the state, county, and Brentwood Climate Action Plans.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it could capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, diverting an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing pollution from littered plastic bottles that break down in the environment and get washed into the Chesapeake Bay. Recent polling has found that more than 90% of Maryland's voting public would support the Bottle Bill.

We urge you to support HB 331/SB 342 or its new reincarnation to create savings for municipalities and local taxpayers, provide cleaner parks and waterways, and reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution.

Thank you

V. Mayor Jerry Burgess

Town of Brentwood

Town Hall | 3712 Utah Avenue | Brentwood, Maryland 20722 (301) 927-3344 | info@brentwoodmd.gov
www.brentwoodmd.gov



SB 342_SevernRiverAssociation_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: jesse iliff

Position: FAV

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment
Legislation: SB 342
Position: SUPPORT
Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Severn River Association stands in strong support of **Senate Bill 342**, which would establish a beverage container deposit program in Maryland. This approach is proven across the country and internationally to dramatically reduce litter, cut recycling costs, and improve the quality of recovered materials.

Maryland generates an enormous volume of disposable beverage containers each year, and our current recycling systems are not capturing them. Approximately **5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, yet only 25% are recycled.**¹ More than **4 billion containers—2.6 billion of them plastic—are discarded, littered, or incinerated every year.**² SB 342 offers a proven, cost-effective solution.

Deposit-return systems (DRS), or “bottle bills,” consistently outperform all other recycling approaches. A 2025 global analysis found that DRS programs **reduce beverage container litter by more than 50% on average** across the U.S., Europe, and Australia.³ States with long-standing programs—such as **Michigan, Oregon, Maine, and California**—regularly achieve **70–90% redemption rates**, dramatically reducing the volume of containers entering waterways and roadways.⁴ Maryland’s current litter profile mirrors that of states before they adopted deposit systems. The evidence is clear: if we want to cut container litter in half or more, a deposit program is the only proven tool.

Deposit programs do more than reduce litter—they strengthen recycling systems and reduce costs for local governments. Containers returned through DRS systems are far cleaner than curbside materials, sorted by material type, reducing contamination, and more valuable to manufacturers seeking recycled content.⁵ These benefits improve the economics of recycling statewide. Moreover, states with DRS report lower municipal litter-cleanup costs, reduced landfill and incineration volumes and less contamination in curbside recycling streams, lowering processing costs.⁶

Maryland currently pays for the consequences of low recycling rates—through cleanup, disposal, and environmental damage. SB 342 shifts responsibility upstream and creates a circular system where materials retain value, which will deliver environmental and public health benefits by reducing plastic pollution in waterways and microplastic generation, in turn reducing the levels of micro- and nanoplastics consumed by humans and animals alike.

¹ [01_23_2026-beverage-container-recycling-refund-litter-reduction-coalition-fact-sheet.pdf](#)

² *id*

³ https://resource-recycling.com/resource-recycling-magazine/2025/09/15/the-evidence-is-in-what-the-data-says-about-bottle-bills-litter-and-the-economy/?utm_source=copilot.com

⁴ [10 states Redemption Rates 080524](#)

⁵ [Bottle Deposit Laws Can Increase Plastics Recycling - Association of Plastic Recyclers \(APR\)](#)

⁶ [Microsoft Word - DRS Factsheet-Litter \(long\)-29Jan2021.docx](#)

Given that **2.6 billion plastic beverage containers** are discarded in Maryland each year, the potential environmental benefit is enormous. Maryland has long invested in protecting its waterways, yet beverage containers remain one of the most persistent and preventable sources of pollution. SB 342 is a practical, data-driven solution that will deliver immediate and long-term benefits.

For decades, deposit-return systems in other states have demonstrated their effectiveness in reducing litter, improving recycling, and saving taxpayer dollars. Maryland's current system captures only a fraction of the 5.5 billion containers sold each year, leaving billions to pollute our communities and waterways. SB 342 proposes a proven system which is fiscally responsible and an environmentally essential step forward.

I respectfully urge the Committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,



Jesse L. Iliff
Executive Director
Severn River Association
jesse@severnriver.org

SB 342

Uploaded by: Jessica Coyle

Position: FAV



Laurel for the Patuxent strongly supports the Beverage Container and Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, HB331 (or SB342). The purpose of our organization is to promote the health of our Patuxent River watershed through a variety of environmental projects which include establishing native plant gardens, planting trees, environmental education and art, invasive plant removal, and sponsoring litter cleanups, all in the city of Laurel.

While engaging in these activities and just in general driving throughout our state, we are all aware of the amount of litter along the roadsides, a substantial portion of which are beverage containers. That is because only about 23% of beverage containers sold in the state are collected for recycling. The rest are left in the environment, most of which will eventually enter the river, the Bay and eventually the ocean. We know that a bottle redemption program, which has already proven effective in ten US states and numerous countries around the world, would successfully address this issue. Without this bottle return program, nothing will be done and the litter will just continue to pollute our waterways.

In addition to litter reduction, this program has many other advantages as enumerated in the fact sheet which has been distributed. As written, it would be self-financing - taxpayer funding would not be necessary so it is a win-win solution.

We look forward to the passage of HB331 into law this legislative session so that it becomes an important part of the effort our state continues to make in creating a cleaner, healthier Maryland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Coyle".

Jessica Coyle, President

Laurel for the Patuxent
329 Prince George St.
Laurel, MD 20707

SB342_Maryland Native Plant Society_Rogers_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Jimmy Rogers

Position: FAV



Maryland Native Plant Society

APPRECIATION CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Testimony: SB342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment
Hearing Date: February 10, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Committee:

The Maryland Native Plant Society supports SB342, which establishes a program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers, reduce litter and pollution, and reduce costs associated with both. Every beverage container that ends its life in a recycling facility is one fewer that can become litter. Litter, whether intentional or accidental, is a serious threat to Maryland's native plants and the wildlife that depend on them.

Bottle deposit programs are historically effective in motivating residents to police and properly dispose of container waste. A 2021 survey of litter across the United States¹ found that in states with bottle deposit programs, bottle deposit materials were left in waterways less than half as frequently (per capita) in those states, and even non-deposit materials were found less frequently.

We are particularly concerned about the proper disposal of plastic bottles, whose decomposition releases plastic particles that are essentially impossible to eliminate once they have infiltrated aquatic and soil environments. A growing body of research² is showing plastic particles change soil structure, reduce soil fertility, can impair or kill soil microbes essential for plant health, and impact root growth. When plastic particles break down small enough, they can be taken up directly by plants, which both impacts their growth and transfers that plastic to the herbivores that eat them (including humans).

These microscopic changes can ultimately disrupt whole plant communities, which can only further imperil our rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) plants in Maryland.

This effort to keep litter properly contained and out of our soils and waterways has our support and we ask for a favorable report on SB342.

Jimmy Rogers, MS, CBLP
Member, Maryland Native Plant Society
magicscientist@gmail.com

Judy Fulton
President, Maryland Native Plant Society
jfulton5@gmail.com

References:

¹ [Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study Report](#), p. 72, March 2021

² Noreen Khalid, Muhammad Aqeel, Ali Noman, [Microplastics could be a threat to plants in terrestrial systems directly or indirectly](#), Environmental Pollution, Volume 267, 2020

Williams Testimony SB SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Kaitlin Williams

Position: FAV

SB 342: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Hearing Date: 2/10/26

Position: **SUPPORT**

To Members of the Committee:

I am an MD/PhD candidate at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. I completed my PhD in May of 2024, and my thesis characterized how plastic-associated compounds (like BPA, BPB, and other bisphenols/phthalates) are involved in inflammatory disease, particularly hidradenitis suppurativa, a chronic debilitating skin disease. Our findings were alarming and obvious: *plastic compounds are present in both the tissue and cells of patients and cause molecular changes to normal cells that create the disease phenotype.*¹ We have now begun counseling patients in clinic on how to best avoid these compounds, and discussions often center around how plastic pollution is related to human health.

These data are not the first example of plastics in human disease. While scientists have long known plastic compounds are capable of harm in animal and cell models, findings in recent years have shown these chemicals are present in human bodies and are associated with worse health outcomes. For example, higher microplastic content in atherosclerotic plaques are linked with worse cardiovascular outcomes, like stroke and heart attack.² Similarly, a recent study evaluated post-mortem brain tissue from patients with dementia, and found greater microplastic burden than those found in healthy brains.³ Plastic contamination – in our dirt, air, and most importantly diet – are being revealed as a growing systemic issue that requires top-down level structural changes.

Global production of plastics has skyrocketed in the last 20 years and is only expected to increase.^{4,5} In 2022, global plastic production reached 400.3 million metric tons, a 1.6% year-over-year increase.⁶ Since 1950, approximately 1 metric ton (Mt) of plastic has been produced for every person on the planet.⁷ It is not surprising, given this, that plastic exposure and accumulation in humans has also exploded; as of 2024, 100% of 62 placentas tested positive for microplastics.⁸ In a urine biomonitoring study of over 2,500 subjects from 2003-2004 in the United States, BPA was detected in 92.6% of the study population.¹¹ We can only predict this percentage has risen as plastics have become more common in food packaging, and at least in China from 2004 to 2019 this was confirmed in both serum and urine analysis.¹² Ingestion of contaminated food and beverage is by far

the most abundant source of human exposure to bisphenols, and likely other plastic compounds, by an order of magnitude,^{9,9,10} and we need to take steps to mitigate this damage.

Curbing plastic contamination of the environment, for both planetary and human health, is essential. I have lived in Baltimore City for 7 years and constantly see plastic bottles as litter in the parks, streets, and most alarmingly, the water. Without incentive to prevent this, plastic waste will continue to leach into our water system and contaminate our food and drink. I predict we will continue to see worsening environmental impacts and human disease the more plastic we allow to remain contaminating our system. Caring for health implications goes beyond human decency: The Minderoo-Monaco Commission on Plastics and Human Health in 2023 predicted a 920 billion dollar economic loss in the United States related to disease and disability due to plastic-associated chemicals PBDE, BPA and DEHP alone.¹³ It is prudent to note the lead economist on the commission, Dr. Maureen Cropper, is a UMD Distinguished Professor of Economics. This same commission notes an egregious deficit in the recovery and recycling of single use plastic containers, like bottles. One of the main recommendations of the commission was “enhancing plastic waste recovery and recycling”, which may be the first and most implementable step in our society addressing this rising concern.¹³ SB 342 seeks to address this.

I did not expect to become an advocate against plastic pollution during my medical training, but the science implicating it in disease is incredibly disturbing and convincing.

I therefore urge a favorable report on SB 342.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kaitlin Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a distinct "W" at the end.

Kaitlin Williams

MD/PhD Candidate

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Works Cited

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4. Tsai, W.-T. Survey on the Environmental Risks of Bisphenol A and Its Relevant Regulations in Taiwan: An Environmental Endocrine-Disrupting Chemical of Increasing Concern. *Toxics* **11**, 722 (2023).
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SB342 Bottle Bill testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Kate Stewart

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

KATE STEWART
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 10, 2026

TO: The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

RE: Senate Bill 342 - *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program* - Support

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4. I am writing on behalf of myself in support of Senate Bill 342 - *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*, also known as the Maryland “Bottle Bill.”

Maryland should join ten states with existing bottle deposit programs to curb litter, cut down on single use plastics in the state, and protect our sensitive streams, parks, and natural areas. This legislation would lead to rapid effects to beautify our state, save money on litter pickup efforts, and send a clear message about priorities in Maryland when federal agencies are rolling back environmental protections.

The State Highway Administration reports that it has spent millions of dollars (\$17.6 million in 2024) cleaning up trash from along our highways. In a state with many budget priorities, we have the chance with this bill to reduce costs and encourage a whole of society approach to reducing litter. When our communities look better, people feel better and enjoy spending time in our public spaces, at our businesses, and traveling around our state. This bottle deposit program would take a big step in that direction.

On a recent panel with Anacostia Riverkeeper Trey Sherard, he reported that the most commonly seen item polluting the Anacostia watershed is a plastic bottle. We can build upon the steps taken by multiple regional jurisdictions like the recently implemented single use plastic carryout bag ban in Montgomery County by implementing a bottle deposit program.

I urge your support of SB342 to cut down on cleanup costs and protect Maryland's environment.

2026 SB342 Bottle Bill Senate Support Letter DWC.p

Uploaded by: Katherine Hardy

Position: FAV



Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

We are writing to express our strong support for the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (SB342), a crucial piece of legislation that promises to have a significant positive impact on our environment and communities. As concerned citizens committed to sustainability and environmental stewardship, we believe that the Maryland Bottle Bill represents a vital step towards a cleaner, greener future for our state.

The Maryland Bottle Bill, which proposes a deposit-return system for beverage containers, has proven successful in numerous other states across the country. This system incentivizes the recycling of bottles and cans by offering a small refund for each container returned, ultimately reducing litter, conserving resources, and decreasing the burden on our landfills.

Implementing the Bottle Bill in Maryland would yield numerous benefits:

Environmental Impact

By encouraging the recycling of beverage containers, the bill would significantly reduce the amount of litter in our cities, parks, and waterways. This initiative would help protect wildlife and preserve the natural beauty of our state. Additionally, recycling reduces the need for raw materials, thereby conserving energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Economic Advantages

The deposit-return system would create new jobs in the recycling and processing industries, boosting our local economy. Furthermore, the reduction in litter would decrease the costs associated with cleanup efforts, allowing municipalities to allocate resources to other pressing needs.

Community Engagement

The Bottle Bill fosters a sense of responsibility and environmental consciousness among residents. By participating in the deposit-return system, individuals of all ages can contribute to a collective effort to protect our environment. This engagement can lead to broader support for other sustainability initiatives and a stronger sense of community.

In conclusion the Maryland Bottle Bill is a forward-thinking and effective solution to address the pressing issue of waste management and environmental conservation. We urge you to support this legislation and help pave the way for a cleaner, healthier Maryland. Together, we can make a meaningful difference for our environment and future generations.

Please add this testimony to the witness list for SB342 heard by the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee on February 10th, 2026.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Democratic Women's Club of Worcester County

PO Box 1242

Ocean Pines, MD 21811

Democraticwomensclubworcesterc@gmail.com

Bill__SB 342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling

Uploaded by: Kathleen Valdivia

Position: FAV

Bill: SB342: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter
Reduction Program

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Bill Sponsor: Senators Brook, Augustine, Guzzone, Hettleman, Kagan, Love, Muse, Smith, and
A. Washington

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Submitting Organization: The Green Team of St John The Evangelist Roman Catholic Church

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB342. The Green Team at St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic (SJERC) Church in Columbia, Maryland, urges this committee to vote favorably on the "Bottle Bill." Our group's mission is to care for God's creation as instructed by Catholic social teaching. To that end, our activities include planting trees and gardens, educating ourselves and our communities about environmental issues, and engaging in advocacy. We are providing written testimony today in strong support of SB342, which would greatly reduce plastic and litter pollution that would protect our waterways and our Chesapeake Bay.

As you know, Beverage container deposit programs are a proven and very effective method for increasing recycling, reducing litter and creating a cleaner and more valuable recycling stream. In other states that have instituted these programs, they have achieved recovery rates of nearly 90%, a significant improvement from the 35% achieved by municipal recycling programs. Previous beverage deposit programs in the 60s and 70s worked quite well. With new technology such as the reverse vending machines, the program will be easier and even more effective and would significantly reduce our state's waste.

This proposal has been around a bit and so the details on how this program would operate have been satisfactorily worked out to address earlier concerns. The program would:

- set a deposit level that will motivate the public to change behavior;
- have beverage producers take responsibility for financing and implementation with significant oversight from MD Department of Environment;
- promote development of reusable/refillable beverage container systems;
- would pay for itself, including the MDE oversight.

The benefits of this bill are immense in reducing our beverage container litter and plastic pollution, increasing water quality, quadrupling our beverage recycling rates, reducing greenhouse gases, saving taxpayers and local governments money, and creating jobs.

It is time to pass this law and move forward on the protection of Maryland's environment and our people.

The Green Team of SJERC Church strongly supports SB342 and urges a FAVORABLE report in Committee.

SB0342-Trash Free Maryland

Uploaded by: Kelly Doordan

Position: FAV



Trash Free Maryland
3717 Boston St., #242
Baltimore, MD 21224

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB342 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee:

Trash Free Maryland strongly supports SB342 – Maryland Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. This legislation would create a recycling refund for beverage containers sold in our state (also known as a “bottle bill” or “deposit-return-system”) to reduce litter and improve recycling quantity and commodity quality in our state. The program does this while being funded by producers – shifting financial responsibility for beverage container waste upstream from local governments and taxpayers to the producers – and designed to maximize redemption rates and litter reduction for covered beverage containers.

Trash Free Maryland is a nonprofit organization that works with communities across the state to achieve our vision of a Maryland free of trash and litter, where lands and waterways are safe and healthy for all to enjoy. We partner with statewide and local anti-litter and watershed protection organizations to identify problematic and significant contributors to litter and to develop effective policy solutions to prevent the most prevalent types of litter at the source. Our Trash Free Maryland Coalition collaborates to educate and unite communities and decisionmakers behind evidence-based policies. We support the bottle bill because bottle bills have proven to be highly impactful on litter in the U.S. and globally.

We can benefit from the decades of bottle bill experience as well as new bottle bill programs and emerging redemption technologies just beginning to be implemented.¹ SB342 is unique and targeted to Maryland’s needs. This bill benefits from extensive stakeholder conversations, best practices and lessons learned from the ten U.S. bottle bill states, and experience from recycling refund programs worldwide. Importantly, it is designed for optimal consumer convenience to maximize redemption rates and litter reduction. This highly effective program will also improve recycling rates and quality as well as help build essential foundations for expanding future reuse and refill opportunities. These are all components of a necessary reduction and transition away from single-use packaging.

What did Maryland’s 2025 Recycling Needs Assessment say about the bottle bill?

¹ The Status of EPR-PPP and DRS Around the World, Container Recycling Institute, October 2025, https://www.container-recycling.org/images/2026/CRI_EPR-DRS-Factsheet-Oct-1-2025.pdf. Summarizing the worldwide status of jurisdictions and year of implementation of extended producer responsibility for packaging, container deposit return systems, or both. Notably, fourteen jurisdictions with fully implemented EPR are now beginning DRS.

In February 2025, Maryland’s Department of the Environment (MDE) published the Maryland Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment, which included analysis of the state’s recycling infrastructure and performance as well as projections of future recycling performance under a possible future extended producer responsibility system for packaging and paper products (EPR-PPP). Citing the 2023 Eunomia and Ball Corporation “50 States of Recycling Report,” the Needs Assessment noted that states with bottle bills have high redemption rates (52%-91%) while also having curbside recycling programs in place.² MDE estimated in the Recycling Needs Assessment that Maryland’s recycling rate for Paper and Packaging Products (PPP) could increase from 34% to 50% or greater with an EPR for packaging program.³

Although Maryland’s Needs Assessment scope did not include a detailed future state analysis of a bottle bill alone or EPR plus a bottle bill, the Needs Assessment did note, “EPR and bottle bills complement each other by incentivising materials management in a way that results in a high quality feedstock, which allow materials to be utilized at their highest and best use. Importantly, bottle bills are able to effectively drive demand for recycled feedstock which ultimately results in increased recycling performance.”⁴

Maryland’s Needs Assessment also described modeling in Eunomia’s landmark 2023 “50 States of Recycling” report for the Ball Corporation which found that EPR for packaging combined with a bottle bill resulted in higher recycling rates for rigid plastic, aluminum, and glass. The 50 States of Recycling report analyzed the current state of recycling in all 50 U.S. states, and included two case studies from Washington and Colorado modeling future scenarios of recycling and economic impacts of EPR for packaging alone (“EPR-PPP”) or EPR for packaging plus recycling refund (“EPR-PPP + RR”).⁵ Washington’s baseline recycling rate was 26%, EPR alone had an estimated peak recycling rate of 59%, and EPR plus recycling refund had an accelerated progress to reach 79% recycling rate by year 9. The findings for Colorado were similar: baseline 11%, EPR alone 49%, and EPR plus recycling refund reaching 82%. The findings were unequivocal that EPR plus recycling refunds deliver better performance at a faster pace and deliver maximum recycling rates compared to either program alone.⁶ Maryland’s baseline of 34% and projected 50% recycling with EPR alone could be improved by adding a complementary beverage container recycling refund with benefits to our overall recycling rates and cobenefits in litter reduction, jobs, and reuse.

How will extended producer responsibility for packaging and the bottle bill work together?

Since this body’s passage of extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging legislation in 2025, we have an exciting opportunity to improve and accelerate recycling in our state through the

² Maryland Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment, Maryland Department of the Environment, p.5 (https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/RMP/Documents/Statewide%20Recycling%20Needs%20Assessment%20Final%20Report_PDF.pdf). As part of the project team, Eunomia Research and Consulting, Inc. (“Eunomia”) led the development of the baseline and future state modeling for the Needs Assessment.

³ *Id.*, at p.6.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ 50 States of Recycling 2.0, Ball Corporation and Eunomia Research and Consulting, 2023. The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates, https://www.ball.com/getmedia/dffa01b0-3b52-4b90-a107-541ece7ee07c/50-STATES_2023-V14.pdf

⁶ 50 States of Recycling 2.0: A State-by-State Assessment of 2021 Containers and Packaging Recycling Rates, December 2023, Summary Powerpoint, https://www.ball.com/getmedia/4a9625c4-32d8-44df-a8af-e2d443f0668f/50-States-of-Recycling-2-0-Summary-Deck_FIN AL.pdf, at p.31.

implementation of a complementary beverage container recycling refund program. Packaging EPR will help finance improvements to our residential curbside recycling programs, but the bottle bill will help capture beverage containers that are consumed away from home and on-the-go by creating a cash incentive for people to collect them and return for recycling. Curbside programs will continue, but our state will benefit from production of cleaner commodity streams and more complete capture of recyclable materials. Local governments and service providers will have access to reimbursements from the packaging EPR system, ensuring that taxpayers and local governments aren't left holding the bill for maintaining recycling programs. Curbside recycling, disposal, and deposit-return programs all cost money; the choice is whether government, taxpayers, or producers pay for the systems we need to manage our packaging waste.

Curbside programs do not capture all of the recyclable beverage containers, and especially struggle to capture containers consumed away from home. Plastic bottles have been increasing in proportion relative to aluminum cans, and curbside programs now must cover costs of collecting and processing not only high value aluminum cans, but also low value mixed glass and plastic containers. The bottle bill would remove much of this cumbersome material from the recycling stream, saving capacity in local recycling programs. Nondeposit containers are a subsidy by taxpayers to the producers – a hidden tax.

We need to act now on the plastic pollution crisis. Systemic policy changes will be needed to turn the tide on plastic production and pollution. Implementing a bottle bill to reduce litter and support pathways to reuse and refill would follow in Maryland's proud tradition of leadership and legislative action on problematic and avoidable sources of litter, such as our nation-leading ban on polystyrene foam food packaging and plastic microbeads. Foam food packaging clamshell containers used to be prevalent in our litter cleanups. We are thrilled to report that the quantities we find have fallen substantially since Maryland implemented a targeted policy to reduce foam litter. We know how effective bottle bills can be for litter reduction. We look forward to a day when we can report back that we are finding significantly fewer littered beverage containers in our cleanups. The bottle will help us get closer to our trash free vision.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB342 to give our state the best chance for full realization of the benefits of beverage container producer responsibility.

Contact: Kelly Doordan (kelly@trashfreemaryland.org), Executive Director, Trash Free Maryland



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony On: SB342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Position: Support
Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

We enthusiastically support SB342 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. SB342 would set up a recycling refund program for beverage containers to reduce one of the most prevalent sources of litter in Maryland. The most effective recycling programs in the United States are in states where consumers can get a refund in exchange for returning their beverage container for recycling, and SB342 would

bring the most effective aspects of this proven litter reduction policy to Maryland.

Adding cash value to empty beverage containers provides a proven incentive for consumers to return empty containers for recycling. Importantly, this same incentive applies to containers consumed at home and on-the-go, providing a mechanism to ensure that even containers consumed away from home are returned for recycling rather than trashed or littered.

We support SB342 for the following reasons:

- Litter reduction is a primary and unique benefit of beverage container deposit-return programs compared to curbside recycling programs alone. A 2020 national litter study found states with beverage container recycling refunds have 50% less litter than other states.¹
- Local governments across the state spend millions more on litter abatement and cleanup programs in our neighborhoods, urban districts, and waterways. Maryland's State Highway Administration spends more than \$17 Million annually to remove roadside litter on state roads. Reducing litter at the source will save our state money.
- SB342 will shift responsibility for beverage container waste from local governments and taxpayers to the producers of the containers.
- In states with recycling refunds, the recycling rate for plastic bottles is 63%. States without a recycling refund program recycle only 17% of their plastic bottles on average.²
- Bottle bill states, with just 28% of the population, capture more materials for recycling and are responsible for 47% of glass bottles and jars recycled, 51% of aluminum cans recycled, and 62% of all PET bottles recycled nationally.³
- The ten US states with recycling refund programs produce cleaner material streams and supply more than 50% of glass cullet the glass container industry can use.⁴
- Curbside recycling programs and recycling refunds co-exist in all ten U.S. states with bottle bills. In fact, environmental benefits are maximized when well-designed beverage container recycling refunds are paired with extended producer responsibility for other packaging materials.⁵

Beverage container recycling refunds are effective. This is a tried and true policy that will significantly reduce the estimated 40-60% litter made of beverage containers trashing our streets, neighborhoods, and waterways, and the fully implemented program will be funded by producers rather than taxpayers.

By contrast, today Maryland taxpayers bear significant costs for litter removal. Here are just a few examples. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) alone spends over \$17M annually to remove approximately nearly 3.3 million pounds of litter. SHA litter removal costs have nearly doubled since 2020, from \$8.9M to \$17.6M per year. According to the agency

¹ Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study <https://kab.org/litter-study>

² National Stewardship Action Foundation and Eunomia State of the States Report 2021

³ The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of Containers and Packaging Recycling Rates 2021

⁴ Glass Packaging Institute 2024

⁵ Eunomia: The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates 2023/2024 <https://www.ball.com/sustainability/real-circularity/50-states-of-recycling>

“that’s more than \$68 million” spent on litter in 5 years.⁶ Despite having well-developed residential recycling programs, Maryland local governments still must fund their own street cleaning, urban district, and park and stream litter cleanup programs. Trash Free Maryland also knows of hundreds of cleanups across Maryland conducted by thousands of volunteers annually. There are thousands more conducted by residents in their own communities. Other societal costs of litter are unquantified. Health professionals tell us children who grow up in communities with litter are less likely to have successful outcomes. Littered plastic containers break down in the environment into smaller pieces and microplastics, potentially irreversibly harming human health and Maryland’s unique aquatic resources. Litter affects us all.

Fortunately there is a policy solution and we can benefit from lessons learned through decades of implementation elsewhere to craft a bill uniquely beneficial to Maryland.

Recycling refund programs for beverage containers go hand-in-hand with extended producer responsibility for other types of packaging. Several states – California, Maine, and Oregon – will implement packaging producer responsibility alongside existing beverage container deposit return systems. Around the world, fourteen governments with fully implemented extended producer responsibility for packaging and paper products recognize the unique benefits of beverage container recycling refunds and are now implementing complementary deposit return systems alongside their packaging programs.⁷ Deposit return systems help capture more materials and cleaner commodity streams, especially for containers consumed away from home and curbside recycling programs. Recycling refund programs help capture highly recyclable beverage containers that might otherwise be wasted or littered to feed demand for high quality recycled materials.

Marylanders take great pride in our natural environment and are fed up with litter. Marylanders are concerned about litter’s health impacts and contribution to microplastic loading in the environment. SB342 is a modern recycling refund program based on proven policies that are effective, equitable, and supported by the public. We look forward to working with you on this exciting and highly impactful policy.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB342.

Contact: Kelly Doordan, Trash Free Maryland (kelly@trashfreemaryland.org)

Trash Free Maryland
Anacostia Riverkeeper
Audubon Mid-Atlantic
Audubon Society of Central Maryland
Blue Water Baltimore
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Clean Water Action
Climate Reality Greater Maryland

⁶ Maryland State Highway Administration, Litter Removal, Cost of Litter, <https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/index.aspx?PageId=358> (accessed February 2026)

⁷ The Status of EPR-PPP and DRS Around the World, Container Recycling Institute, https://www.container-recycling.org/images/2025/CRI_EPR-DRS_Factsheet_May_21_2025.pdf

Corsica River Conservancy
Elders Climate Action Maryland
Green Sanctuary of Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Legislative Coalition - Climate Justice Wing
Mr. Trash Wheel
National Wildlife Federation
Nature Forward
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Rock Creek Conservancy
Safe Skies Maryland
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
Surfrider Foundation
The Severn River Association
Vernal Pools Partners
Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore
Waterkeepers Chesapeake

MOS SB0342 Beverage Container Recycling Fund Febru

Uploaded by: Kurt Schwarz

Position: FAV



February 11, 2025

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB0342—Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) strongly supports SB0342. Beverage Container Return programs have been shown to reduced beverage container litter by as much as 84%, while increasing recycling rates of beverage containers up to 90%. Recycling also keeps beverage containers out the waste stream, resulting in savings for municipalities and counties.

As can be seen along any road, beverage containers make up a large part of roadside litter. According to the Container Recycling Institute, numerous studies in many states have shown that beverage containers make up a large proportion of litter, and states with bottle bills have less litter.¹

We are particularly concerned about plastic beverage containers. Plastic pollution is a serious threat to birds. Bottles break down into smaller bits, which birds mistake for food, which can block their digestive system, while the chemicals from plastics can disrupt kidney and endocrine systems.

Sb0342 will reduce litter, including plastic bottles, which will also benefit our declining bird populations. It will also markedly improve the recycling feedstock, increasing its value, and promoting proper recycling.

North America has lost almost 30% of its birds since 1970.² We must reduce threats to our declining bird populations, and this bill, HB0331, will help reduce the threat to birds of plastic pollution.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report for SB0342, to reduce litter, promote recycling, and protect our declining birds.

Kurt R. Schwarz
Conservation Chair Emeritus

Maryland Ornithological Society
www.mdbirds.org

¹ Container Recycling Institute, Bottle Bill Resource Guide,
<https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/benefits-of-bottle-bills/bottle-bills-prevent-litter>

² Rosenberg, Kenneth V. et al, Decline of the North American avifauna, Science, VOL 366, NO. 6451, 19 September 2019,
https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aaw1313?adobe_mc=MCORGID%3D242B6472541199F70A4C98A6%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1707754028

SB342_Bottle Bill_EEE_CJW_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



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

SB0342_FAV_Bottle_Deposit_EEE_LPP.org .pdf

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV



[SB0342](#): Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Bill Sponsor: Senator Brooks

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Submitting Organization: **Less Plastic Please** by Liz Feighner

Position: Favorable

[Less Plastic Please](#) is a Howard County based grassroots organization representing more than 200 subscribers. We also work with the [Zero Waste Team](#) of [Howard County Sierra Club](#) and are a [Beyond Plastics](#) Affiliate. **We urge support of SB0342**, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, which would create a beverage container refundable deposit program in Maryland depending on the size of the container. The small deposit collected is refunded to the customer when the bottle is returned for recycling.

Reducing the production of plastics and creating a zero-waste economy is one of our top concerns. Less Plastic Please spearheaded campaigns with several organizations in Howard County to advocate for reducing single-use plastics through two successful bills, [Plastic Bag Fee](#) and [Plastic Reduction Law](#). We also hosted a [webinar on the Story of Plastics in 2020](#). As we highlighted during the discussion, plastic pollution is an environmental justice and public health crisis: Fracking, plastics production, litter, and disposal in landfills and by incineration harm communities of color disproportionately. We believe that social justice, racial justice and environmental justice are all part of a single, globally connected Movement for Justice.

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction aka the “MD bottle bill” is a very sensible bill. It is an easy, low-hanging fruit solution to reduce plastic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the energy needed to produce new beverage containers. This could also be called the Back-to-the-Future bill as we easily did this before years ago and would be much better off had we gone back in time and continued bottle deposits instead of switching to single-use beverage containers.

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. 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. 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. It is estimated to achieve a 90% return rate - up from a 25% rate today.

This program would be self-funded from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. So while the state and local counties are grappling with extremely tight

budgets, the program established by the bill would not cost the state at all and relieve the counties and ultimately the taxpayers from the burden of expensive waste/recycling costs.

This bill would provide a high rate of return for containers by creating incentives for the development of refillable and reusable containers. 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. Attainment of all convenience standards identified by the MD Department of the Environment by December 31, 2028; and
4. At least 10% of all beverage containers sold in the state are returned and refilled by December 31, 2038 as it isn't cost effective to produce reusable containers if they are not being returned in order to create a circular and zero waste economy.

The state of Maryland needs to protect our waterways and our beloved Chesapeake Bay from plastic and litter pollution and this bill will accomplish this goal.

We urge a **favorable report for SB0342**.

Submitted for [Less Plastic Please](#) by Liz Feighner
LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com

SB 342 - National Aquarium - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Maggie Ostdahl

Position: FAV



NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

Date: February 6, 2026

Bill: SB 342- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for SB 342. Enacting the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program would increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers, lower waste management costs, and reduce litter and pollution.

In Maryland, 5.5 billion single-use beverage containers are sold every year¹. More than half of these containers are plastic, yet only about a quarter are recycled. The rest end up in landfills, are incinerated, or become litter in our environment. Over time, plastic containers break down into smaller pieces that endanger wildlife, contaminate the global food web, and transport toxins harmful to human health. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels, and every stage of the plastic use cycle contributes to climate change, air pollution and environmental justice concerns. Reducing litter from beverage containers across Maryland is related to all the National Aquarium's strategic conservation goals: saving wildlife and habitats, combatting climate change, and stopping plastic pollution.

The National Aquarium has taken several steps to reduce or eliminate the use of plastic in our facilities, including the elimination of single-use plastic beverage containers from our cafes. The Aquarium also conducts regular debris cleanups, working with dedicated volunteers to pick up over 71,000 plastic beverage containers and caps from the environment over the last five years. As just one of the many organizations in Maryland that conduct regular debris cleanups, this figure underscores the need for a comprehensive change in our approach to waste management that includes passing the Maryland Bottle Bill.

Last year the state took a significant step forward by establishing a framework for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging materials, and refundable bottle deposit programs demonstrably complement EPR for other packaging materials². Bottle deposit programs currently operate in ten other U.S. states and several other countries and are highly effective in recovering beverage containers, increasing recycling rates, and reducing both litter and associated costs of mitigation. Maryland funds several grant programs to support litter removal, and the Maryland Department of Transportation estimates spending approximately \$8 million annually to remove truckloads of litter, including beverage containers, from roadways. Marylanders' time, capacity, as well as millions of dollars could be better allocated by reducing how many beverage containers become litter.

¹ Container Recycling Institute (CRI). "2024 Beverage Market Data Analysis (BMDA)"

² The Status of EPR-PPP and DRS Around the World, Container Recycling Institute, https://www.container-recycling.org/images/2025/CRI_EPR-DRS_Factsheet_May_21_2025.pdf

Maryland should follow the lead of several other states and enact a beverage container deposit return system. This is a critical and cost-effective step towards a cleaner and healthier future for all Marylanders. **We strongly urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 342.**

Contact:

Maggie Ostdahl

Director of Conservation Policy

410-385-8275

mostdahl@aqua.org

SB 342 - MoCo_Elrich_FAV (GA 26).pdf

Uploaded by: Marc Elrich

Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

February 10, 2026

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: Senate Bill 342 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*
Support

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 342 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*. This bill would establish a redeemable deposit on beverage containers sold in Maryland and additional recycling opportunities for consumers to help reduce litter and enhance the recycling of these materials.

According to the Container Recycling Institute, more than 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, but only about a quarter are collected for recycling. The rest are landfilled, littered, or incinerated. Montgomery County operates a successful curbside dual-stream recycling program. However, despite convenient access to residential curbside recycling and extensive outreach and education to residents, residents still often dispose of beverage containers in their trash or by littering. According to the County's 2022 Waste Characterization Study, beverage containers represented approximately 4.5% of the total municipal solid waste tonnage received at the County's waste transfer station and sent to the incinerator for disposal, and a third of that tonnage was PET and HDPE plastic bottles. Montgomery County is committed to maximizing waste diversion to ensure we are not burning valuable and recyclable commodities and to facilitate the closure of our waste incinerator in Dickerson.

Our County departments are also conducting roadside and stream litter removal, much of which by volume is beverage container litter. The 10-15 cent refundable deposit proposed in this bill will be a powerful economic incentive for consumers to return their containers instead of wasting or littering them.

Local governments will continue to operate our existing recycling collection programs and materials recovery facilities. We anticipate a significant volume of beverage container material will continue to be processed through our systems. We appreciate that the bill enables local

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman

Re: Senate Bill 342

February 10, 2026

governments to receive reimbursement related to lost scrap revenue during the first three years of the program. We would prefer that this reimbursement be based on that scrap value only, as cost savings from any reduction in beverage container litter would be difficult to isolate and quantify. We also appreciate that the bill allows for local governments to receive reimbursement for costs incurred in managing beverage containers at a materials recovery facility. This reimbursement should be made permanent rather than end when the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law's provisions begin, as the EPR program would exclude redeemable beverage containers if this bill is passed. These changes would further strengthen this important legislation.

I respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee give this bill a favorable report.

cc: Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB0342.pdf

Uploaded by: Marlene Durholz

Position: FAV

Marlene Durholz
Hanover, MD 21076
February 6, 2026

RE: Favorable position on SB0342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members:

Thank you for your service and work reviewing SB0342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.. I am writing to ask that the committee provide a favorable report on SB0342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

SB0342 is a sensible and proven method of reducing litter and increasing recycling rates. As I have volunteered with Patapsco Heritage Greenway for trash pick-up in the Patapsco watershed, I can attest to the volume of beverage containers littering our watershed.

I urge a Favorable SB0342 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Marlene Durholz
Hanover, MD

01_23_2026-beverage-container-recycling-refund-lit

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV

Maryland Needs a Bottle Bill!

(HB 331 / SB 342)

The Problem

About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually.¹ Despite widespread availability of curbside collection of recyclables and public recycling receptacles, only a quarter of the containers (25%) are captured for recycling. More than 4 billion containers a year, 2.6 billion of which are plastic, are left in the environment—in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways—or incinerated. The number littered is significant: Beverage containers are more than half of the trash by volume in the Anacostia watershed's trash traps.²

Plastic beverage containers pollute our waterways and pose a threat to wildlife and human health. They break up into small pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Scientists estimate that we are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic weekly.



Courtesy of Anacostia Watershed Society

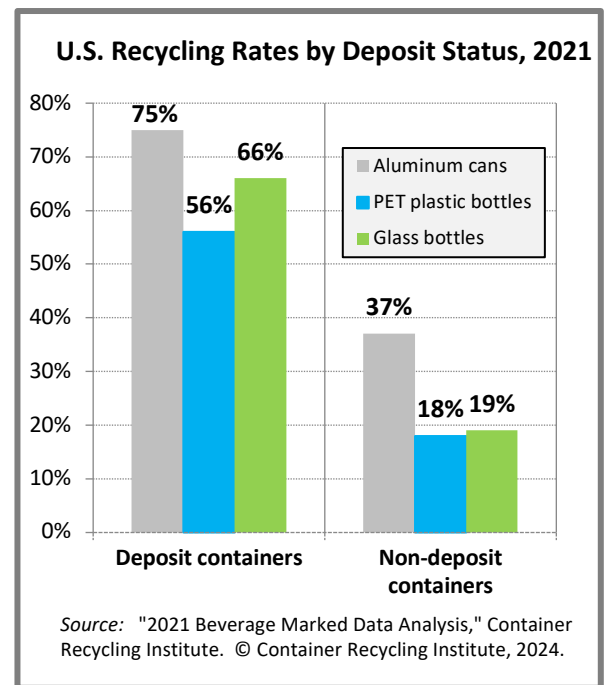
The Solution

Beverage container deposit programs, also known as “bottle bills,” are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. Ten states, covering more than 90 million people, have longstanding, successful programs.³ They add a small deposit to the purchase price of beverage containers that is refunded to customers when the containers are returned for recycling. When empty beverage containers can be redeemed for cash, fewer are littered or likely to remain littered. Purchase the beverage, borrow the container! The refundable deposit is an incentive to return.

Deposit programs also dramatically increase beverage container recycling (figure at right). The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is 2-3 times higher than for non-deposit containers, and the impact is greater with higher deposits. States with a 10-cent deposit have achieved container recycling rates of 90%.

How Would the Program Operate?

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program would create a beverage container deposit program in Maryland with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers, depending on container size. The deposit is refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. The program would rely on reverse vending machines and other new technologies for convenient container redemption to achieve at least a 90% recovery rate.



¹ Container Recycling Institute, Beverage Market Data Analysis, based on 2021 data.

² Anacostia Watershed Society.

³ California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont. Recycling rates in 2021 ranged from 50% to 89%. There are currently 72 container deposit programs worldwide in 61 countries. Increased interest in the past decade has been fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. Collins, Susan. 2020. "International Embrace," *Plastics Recycling Update*, Winter, pp. 38-43.

The program would be operated by a nonprofit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization representing all producers that sell beverages in the state. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) would select the Organization and provide substantial oversight, approving stewardship plans and annual reports and setting the program's convenience standards and handling fees. An Advisory Council of stakeholders would advise MDE on plan approval, implementation, and performance. The program would be self-financing from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. Ten percent of unclaimed deposits would fund a Grant Program to increase the reuse of beverage containers.



A reverse vending machine

The Program's Benefits

- **Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution, and an increase in water quality.** It would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles.
- **Quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate.** The estimated recycling rate, currently only 25% of containers sold in the state, would increase to more than 90%.
- **Increase in high quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers.** The program would generate an additional 13,328 tons of aluminum, 47,665 tons of PET plastic, 7,847 tons of HDPE plastic, and 159,397 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers, annually.
- **Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.** By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 50,371 cars.
- **Savings for taxpayers and local governments.** Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection, processing, and recycling of beverage containers currently disposed, littered, and recycled, diverting materials from landfills and incinerators, saving costs for taxpayers and local governments.
- **Investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems.** Deposits are critical for development of refillable and reusable containers. The program would launch that transition.
- **Job creation.** Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times more jobs as do landfilling or incineration.

Support the Maryland Bottle Bill in 2026 to reduce litter, prevent plastic pollution, increase recycling, and conserve resources! It passed the House Environment and Transportation Committee in 2025! We have momentum!

TAKE ACTION!
 Ask your State
 elected officials to
 pass the Maryland
 Bottle Bill in 2026!!

SCAN ME

SB 342_MDSierraClub_fav 10Feb2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Martha Ainsworth

Position: FAV



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB 342 – “Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB 342, which aims to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution in Maryland. It would create a beverage container deposit program with a 10- or 15-cent refundable deposit on metal, glass, and plastic beverage containers. The deposit would be refunded to the customer when the beverage container is returned for recycling. By attaching value to empty beverage containers, fewer are littered and those that are littered do not remain in the environment. These programs have been highly effective in the U.S. and around the world for reducing beverage container litter and diverting containers from disposal. They also produce a number of other important benefits, highlighted below.

The problem

Beverage container litter in Maryland is pervasive, growing, and is a major source of plastic pollution, posing threats to the environment and human health. About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only about a quarter are recycled.¹ Four billion containers annually are wasted – left in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways, or incinerated. More than half of these wasted containers are plastic. Beverage containers, most of them plastic, account most of the trash in trash traps on the Anacostia River watershed (Exhibit 1).²

Maryland’s beverage container litter problem is so severe that the Environmental Protection Agency declared the Anacostia watershed to be impaired with trash in 2010, and made the same determination in 2014 for the watershed surrounding Baltimore Harbor. Our state, home to the largest estuary in the country – the Chesapeake Bay – also has the dubious distinction of having two of the three water bodies in the country that are impaired for trash and regulated by the EPA under the Clean Water Act. The Maryland State Highway Administration collected 3.3 million pounds of roadside litter on State roads, at a cost of \$17.6 million of taxpayer money, up from \$8.9 million in 2020. This is in addition to roadside litter cleanup financed by local governments. A large share of roadside litter is beverage containers.³

Plastic pollution from beverage containers poses a threat to wildlife and human health. The containers break into ever smaller pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Plastic particles have been found in the food we eat, the air we breathe, and in most human organs, including the human brain. Scientists estimate that we are ingesting up to a credit card’s worth of plastic weekly.⁴ The impact of plastic ingestion on human health, in terms of inflammation and the leaching of chemicals from the plastic, is of great concern.

The solution

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter.⁵ Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs.⁶ Beverage container litter in those states was reduced by 70-84%.⁷ The 2020

¹ Container Recycling Institute (CRI). “2024 Beverage Market Data Analysis (BMDA)” for Maryland, based on 2021 data.

² Anacostia Watershed Society, Anacostia Riverkeeper.

³ State Highway Administration website, “Litter Removal” (<https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/index.aspx?PageId=358>)
See also the MDOT/SHA Litter Fact Sheet (https://roads.maryland.gov/OC/Litter_Fact_Sheet_2025.pdf)

⁴ Dahlberg and University of Newcastle, Australia. 2019. *No Plastic in Nature: Assessing Plastic Ingestion from Nature to People*. Commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund.

⁵ Millette, Samantha, and Clarissa Morawski. 2025. *Littered With Evidence: Proof that Deposit Systems Work*. Reloop, June.

⁶ California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Vermont.

National Litter Survey sponsored by Keep America Beautiful, found half as much deposit-material litter per capita in bottle bill states as in non-bottle bill states.⁸ A study of coastal litter in debris surveys in Australian and U.S. states with and without container deposit legislation found that the share of containers in states with container deposit legislation was 40% lower than in states without the laws.⁹

Refundable deposits both reduce litter and greatly increase recycling rates for beverage containers covered by these programs. Recycling rates for beverage containers in the ten deposit states in 2019 averaged 75%, ranging from 59% to 91%, compared with an estimated 23% in Maryland, with no deposit (Exhibit 2). Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit. Deposit beverage containers are 2-3 times more likely to be recycled than are containers not subject to a deposit (Exhibit 3). The ten deposit states represent 27% of the U.S. population but contribute 48% of U.S. beverage container recycling.¹⁰ In states with beverage container deposit programs, deposits coexist with curbside collection to maximize recycling by capturing containers for beverages consumed at and away from home.

The **Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program** (SB 342, a.k.a, the “Maryland Bottle Bill”) would initiate a deposit as of January 1, 2029 and has benefitted from lessons learned over the past 50 years for successful beverage container deposit programs.

- It would maximize the reduction of beverage container litter and waste by including all beverages in metal, plastic, and glass beverage containers¹¹ and setting a deposit level that will motivate the public to change behavior: 10¢ for containers holding up to 24 fluid ounces and 15¢ for larger containers, up to 3 liters.
- It would require beverage producers to take responsibility for financing and implementing the program, with significant oversight from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). The program would be implemented by a non-profit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization of all beverage producers selling or distributing redeemable beverage containers in the State. MDE’s responsibilities would include: appointing the Stewardship Organization; approving a Stewardship Plan and annual reports; and setting convenience standards and handling fees, among others. An Advisory Council of stakeholders would advise MDE on approval of the Stewardship Organization, its stewardship plan, annual reports, and program implementation and performance.
- It would create the conditions for future development and adoption of reusable/refillable beverage container systems. Ten percent of unclaimed deposits would fund a Recycling Refund Grant program, managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers.
- The program would pay for itself, including MDE oversight. It would be funded from registration and Stewardship Organization fees paid by beverage producers, the revenue from sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties paid by producers. Registration fees calculated to completely cover the costs of MDE oversight in the next year would be kept in a special account in the State Recycling Trust Fund that can only be used for specific program purposes. MDE’s start-up costs will be reimbursed by producers to the General Fund at the start of the first year of operation.

Several features of the bill have been updated in response to feedback from stakeholders since it was first introduced in the 2023 General Assembly, including:

- Implementation by a single stewardship organization to facilitate MDE oversight.
- Extension of the preparation time for program launch by one year (from 18 to 30 months)
- Ensuring that MDE’s start-up expenditures are fully covered, via reimbursements to the General Fund. The program is completely self-financing.

⁷ Reloop and CRI. 2021. *Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Reduce Litter*. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/DRS-Litter-Fact-Sheet-Summary-14June2021.pdf>

⁸ Keep America Beautiful. 2021. “2020 National Litter Survey”, Summary Report. May.

⁹ Schuyler, Qamar, *et al.* 2018. “Economic incentives reduce plastic inputs to the ocean,” *Marine Policy* 96: 250-255. October.

¹⁰ CRI. “2024 Beverage Market Data Analysis (BMDA)” for Maryland, based on 2021 data. *Op.Cit.*

¹¹ Medical beverages and infant formula are the only excluded beverages.

- Clarifying the expectations for retailers and hospitality establishments (sellers of beverages consumed on premises, such as restaurants, hotels, bars, sports venues)
- Exempting small retailers with less than 3,000 square feet of sales area or 150 square feet or less of shelf space displaying redeemable containers from having to accept most containers for redemption and refund.
- Adding a per container materials handling fee for hospitality establishments for collecting and pre-sorting empty redeemed containers to be picked up by the program for recycling.
- Adding provisions for MDE to add more container types in the future.
- Designating the Chesapeake Bay Trust to manage the Grant Program, instead of MDE, and authorizing the Grant Program to finance an evaluation of the investments and policies required to increase the share of reusable containers sold in the state to 10% by 2038.
- Clarifying that local governments are not responsible for financing, operating, or enforcing redemption centers.
- Requiring the Stewardship Organization to reimburse public and private materials recovery facilities for the costs of collecting, transporting, sorting, and processing all unredeemed redeemable containers they collect.

The program's benefits

Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution: The program would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually for recycling, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, diverting at least 236,000 tons of plastic, aluminum, and glass containers from litter, landfills, and incinerators.

Quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate: With a 10-cent deposit, the recycling rate for beverage containers, currently estimated at only about 25% of containers sold in the state, would more than triple, to 90% or more, within the first five years of operation.

Increase in high quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers: When the targets are achieved, the program would generate an additional 13,328 tons of aluminum, 47,665 tons of PET plastic, 7,847 tons of HDPE plastic, and 159,397 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers annually. The program would contribute to creating a circular, bottle-to-bottle economy that maximizes the reduction in waste.

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions: By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from the bill would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent, annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 50,000 cars from the road.

The program is affordable and reduces costs for taxpayers and local governments: The deposit is fully refundable, offers money to people who recycle. Beverage producers would finance the costs of collecting and processing the three-quarters of beverage containers currently being disposed or littered, as well as MDE's startup costs and oversight. The program will divert materials from costly landfills and incinerators. These disposal costs are currently borne by taxpayers and local governments.¹² Refundable deposits do not raise the price of beverage containers or affect beverage sales.¹³

Investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems: Deposits are critical for development of refillable and reusable containers. The program will launch that transition, with a target of 10% of beverage containers sold in Maryland to be reusable and refillable by 2038.

Job creation: Increased recycling generated by a deposit program would create five times as many jobs in collection, sorting, and transporting as created by garbage collection, hauling, landfilling, or incineration.¹⁴ The maintenance of reverse vending machines and investments in the reuse/refill systems will create new opportunities.

¹² A review of more than 48 studies of the impact of beverage container deposit programs on costs to local governments worldwide found that in the context of the overall waste management system, local governments saved costs by adopting the deposit program. Reloop. 20251. *Fact Sheet: Economic benefits of deposit return systems for municipalities*. November. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/resources/economic-benefits-of-deposit-return-systems-for-municipalities/>

¹³ Reloop and Container Recycling Institute. 2023. *The impact of deposit return systems on beverage sales*. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Reloop-Impact-of-DRS-Report.pdf>

¹⁴ Reloop. 2021. *Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Create More Jobs*. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DRS-Factsheet-Jobs-5FEB2021.pdf> .

Overwhelming public support for the Maryland Bottle Bill

According to a January 2025 statewide public opinion poll of registered voters conducted by Gonzales Research, 95% of respondents are concerned about the environmental and health impact of plastic beverage containers and pollution (Exhibit 4). More than 90% of respondents supported a beverage container redemption program in Maryland with a 10-cent refundable deposit that could be refunded at a convenient retailer or redemption site, financed and implemented by beverage companies, not taxpayers. The level of support was at least 80% among all demographic groups, party affiliations, and geographic regions of the state (Baltimore City, Baltimore suburbs, Washington suburbs, and rural areas).¹⁵

Deposit programs complement extended producer responsibility for packaging laws

In 2025, Maryland became one of six states that have passed an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for packaging (SB 901). That program will, among other things, increase access to curbside recycling and require producers to reimburse service providers for the collection, transport, and processing of packaging made from covered materials. However, without a refundable deposit, it will have a negligible impact on reducing beverage container litter or wastage. Many beverages are consumed away from home, so don't enter a curbside bin. Deposit return programs are a type of producer responsibility program that is uniquely effective in reducing beverage container litter because, when empty containers have a refund attached to them, they are more likely to be returned for recycling. The two programs – EPR for packaging and bottle bills -- complement each other and together maximize the benefits to the state. Maryland needs both of them. SB 901 acknowledged this synergy in stating that the passage of packaging EPR legislation “may not be construed to...preclude the separate adoption of a beverage container deposit return program in the State to reduce beverage container pollution and plastic waste.” (§9-2504) The Maryland Bottle Bill offers a proven approach to keeping beverage containers, which consistently rank among the most littered items in our communities, out of our streets and waterways and reducing plastic pollution. In fact, countries across the globe are adding deposit return systems to their existing EPR for packaging programs to increase the capture rate for beverage containers and reduce plastic pollution.¹⁶

Conclusion

Maryland is facing a plastic pollution crisis that is impacting our health and the environment. Beverage container deposit programs are highly effective in reducing beverage container litter, and most are plastic. Bottle bills are spreading worldwide, fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. The proposed program makes beverage producers responsible for fixing the problem and paying for it. And there is overwhelming public support for the program. **We can't afford to wait any longer to act. It's time to pass the Maryland Bottle Bill now.** Every year we wait, another 4 billion containers are left in the environment.

The Sierra Club respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 342.

Martha Ainsworth, Chair
Chapter Zero Waste Team
Martha.Ainsworth@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 - Beverage containers account for more than 70% of trash in Anacostia River trash traps.

Exhibit 2 - Recycling rates for covered beverage containers in deposit states vs. Maryland, 2019

Exhibit 3 - Recycling rates by material type in deposit and non-deposit states, 2019

Exhibit 4 - Public support for the Maryland Bottle Bill

¹⁵Gonzales Polls, Inc. *Maryland Statewide Survey January 2025, Beverage Container Results*, conducted 12/27/2024 – 1/4/2025, with a sample of 811 registered voters. The margin of error is +/- 3.5%..

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/gonzales-report-sierra-club-beverage-container-redemption-program-january-2025.pdf>.

¹⁶ https://www.container-recycling.org/images/2026/CRI_EPR-DRS-Factsheet-Oct-1-2025.pdf

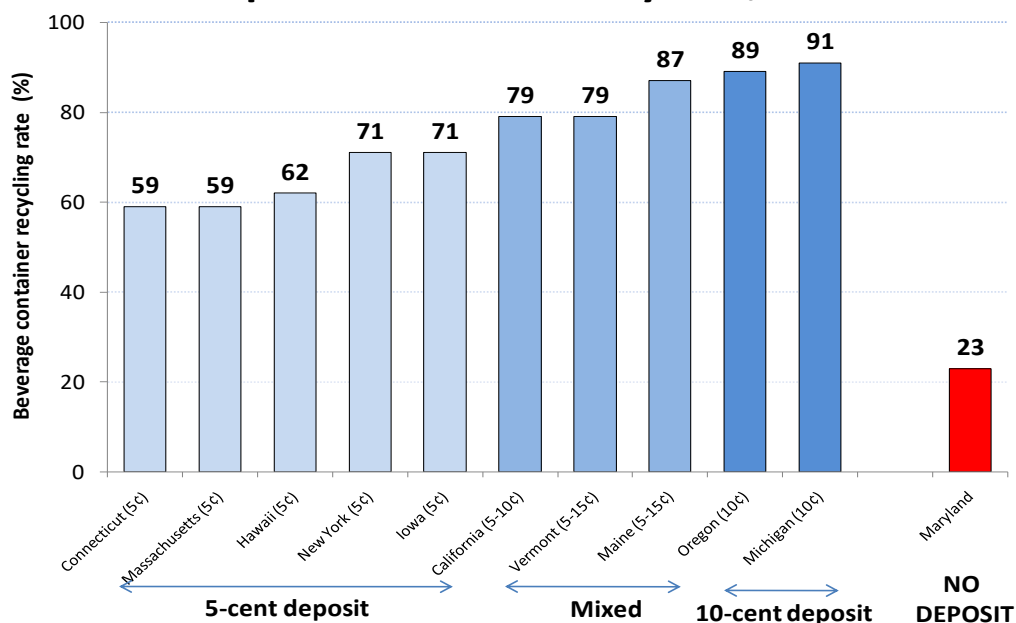
Exhibit 1: Beverage containers account for more than 70% of trash in Anacostia River trash traps, by volume



Source: Trash sort from the River Terrace Trash Trap, Anacostia River, September 28, 2024

Exhibit 2:

Recycling rates (%) for covered beverage containers in deposit states vs. Maryland, 2019



Source: Container Recycling Institute, 2022 Beverage Market Data Analysis

Exhibit 3:

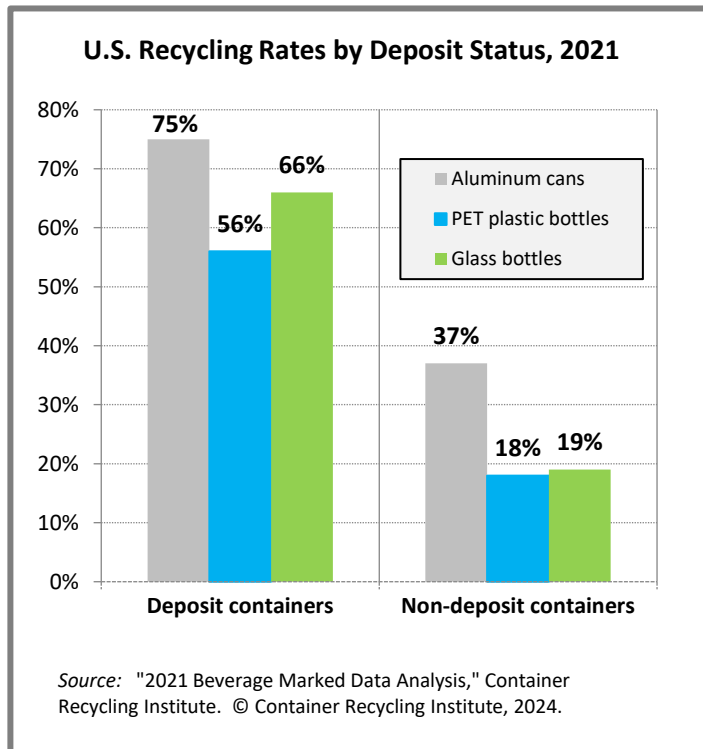
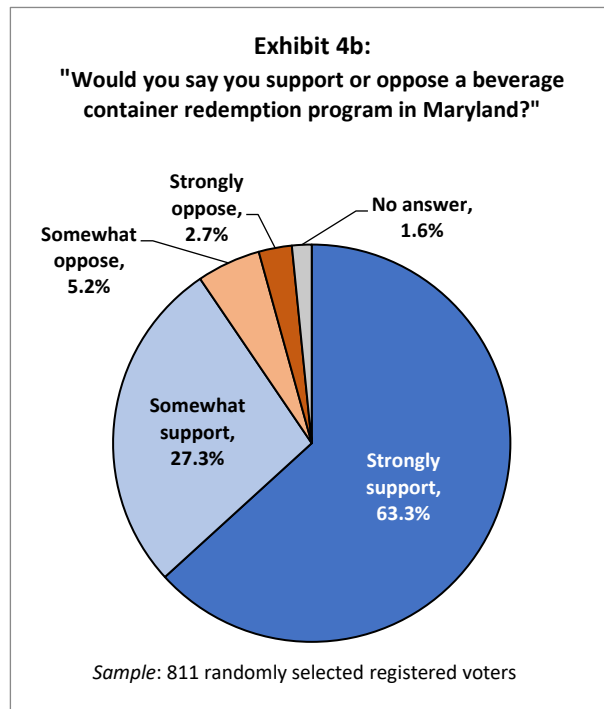
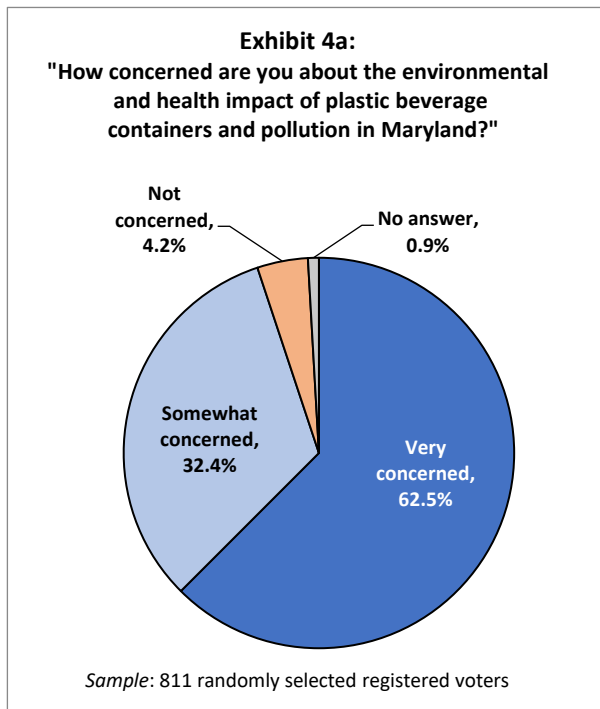


Exhibit 4: Public support for a Maryland Bottle Bill



Source: Gonzales Polls, Inc. *Maryland Statewide Survey January 2025, Beverage Container Results*
<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/gonzales-report-sierra-club-beverage-container-redemption-program-january-2025.pdf>

FAV_SB342 - Bottle Bill Deposit .pdf

Uploaded by: Martinna Parham

Position: FAV



February 6, 2026

SB342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

Waterkeepers Chesapeake and the below signed organizations respectfully request a FAVORABLE report on SB342 which establishes a long-overdue beverage container recycling refund and litter reduction program in the state of Maryland.

Bottle trash, particularly plastic, is a pervasive blight in our waterways, posing a serious threat to the environment and aquatic life. As plastic breaks down into microplastics and nanoplastics, it further contaminates the environment, creating long-term ecological damage. This pollution doesn't just affect wildlife - it enters the human food chain through the consumption of contaminated seafood, and bioaccumulates in our brains at an alarming rate.¹ **Enacting a bottle deposit bill is crucial to reducing plastic waste and protecting both our environment and public health.**

The Anacostia River and Baltimore Harbor are two of the few waterways in the United States with a waterway listed as "impaired" under the federal Clean Water Act for trash, and have an accompanying Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or "pollution diet" for trash. **This means that trash is so prevalent in the watersheds that feed into the Anacostia River and Baltimore Harbor that the rivers aren't meeting water quality standards and that significant efforts are necessary to stop the damage and heal our waterways.** Establishing a state-wide beverage container deposit program would reduce the amount of trash that enters the waste stream in the first place, and would ultimately lead to cleaner, healthier waterways in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and beyond.

¹ Bioaccumulation of microplastics in decedent human brains. Nature Medicine. Nihart et al. February 3, 2025. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03453-1>

Even when beverage containers are properly discarded instead of being littered, their disposal can contribute to the compounding harms that disproportionately impact historically disenfranchised and overburdened communities. Maryland's CY2021 recycling rate was 42.46%, but that rate is highly variable by county and ranges from 62% in Prince George's County to 5% in Somerset County.² The remainder of the waste generated in Maryland is buried in landfills or burned in incinerators, which exacerbates the environmental injustices shouldered by lower-income residents across the state.

A beverage container deposit program is a common-sense and proven strategy to reduce litter, increase recycling rates, and incentivize environmental stewardship by turning trash into treasure with a fully-refundable deposit on plastic, glass, and metal bottles. Ten states in the US have already paved the way for this type of program in Maryland, and the results are clear; states with bottle deposit programs are achieving recycling rates of up to 65%, which is significantly higher than both Maryland's rate and the national average of 32%.³⁴

The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program will create a statewide deposit refund program for single use beverage containers similar to successful programs that already exist in other states. This will increase the monetary value of these bottles, which will therefore keep them out of our incinerators and landfills because people will be incentivized to recycle them properly.

We support SB342 for the following reasons:

- Litter reduction is a primary and unique benefit of beverage container deposit-return programs compared to curbside recycling programs alone. A 2020 national litter study found states with beverage container recycling refunds have 50% less litter than other states.⁵
- Local governments across the state spend millions more on litter abatement and cleanup programs in our neighborhoods, urban districts, and waterways. Maryland's State Highway Administration spends more than \$17 Million annually to remove roadside litter on state roads. Reducing litter at the source will save our state money.
- SB342 will shift responsibility for beverage container waste from local governments and taxpayers to the producers of the containers.
- In states with recycling refunds, the recycling rate for plastic bottles is 63%. States

² County Recyclables by Commodity in Tons for CY21. Compiled by the Maryland Department of the Environment from Reports Submitted for CY21.
<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/Documents/County%20Commodity%20CY21.pdf>

³ The 50 States of Recycling. A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates, pp. 15-17. December 2023. Eunomia Research & Consulting Inc.

⁴ National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Last updated on November 8, 2024.
<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>

⁵ Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study <https://kab.org/litter-study>

- without a recycling refund program recycle only 17% of their plastic bottles on average.⁶
- Bottle bill states, with just 28% of the population, capture more materials for recycling and are responsible for 47% of glass bottles and jars recycled, 51% of aluminum cans recycled, and 62% of all PET bottles recycled nationally.⁷
 - The ten US states with recycling refund programs produce cleaner material streams and supply more than 50% of glass cullet the glass container industry can use.⁸
 - Curbside recycling programs and recycling refunds co-exist in all ten U.S. states with bottle bills. In fact, environmental benefits are maximized when well-designed beverage container recycling refunds are paired with extended producer responsibility for other packaging materials.⁹

Beverage container recycling refunds are effective. This is a tried and true policy that will significantly reduce the estimated 40-60% litter made of beverage containers trashing our streets, neighborhoods, and waterways, and the fully implemented program will be funded by producers rather than taxpayers.

By contrast, today Maryland taxpayers bear significant costs for litter removal. Here are just a few examples. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) alone spends over \$17M annually to remove approximately nearly 3.3 million pounds of litter. SHA litter removal costs have nearly doubled since 2020, from \$8.9M to \$17.6M per year. According to the agency “that’s more than \$68 million” spent on litter in 5 years.¹⁰ Despite having well-developed residential recycling programs, Maryland local governments still must fund their own street cleaning, urban district, and park and stream litter cleanup programs. Trash Free Maryland also knows of hundreds of cleanups across Maryland conducted by thousands of volunteers annually. There are thousands more conducted by residents in their own communities. Other societal costs of litter are unquantified. Health professionals tell us children who grow up in communities with litter are less likely to have successful outcomes. Littered plastic containers break down in the environment into smaller pieces and microplastics, potentially irreversibly harming human health and Maryland’s unique aquatic resources. Litter affects us all.

Fortunately there is a policy solution and we can benefit from lessons learned through decades of implementation elsewhere to craft a bill uniquely beneficial to Maryland.

Recycling refund programs for beverage containers go hand-in-hand with extended producer responsibility for other types of packaging. Several states – California, Maine, and Oregon – will implement packaging producer responsibility alongside existing beverage container deposit return systems. Around the world, fourteen governments with fully implemented extended producer responsibility for packaging and paper products recognize the unique benefits of

⁶ National Stewardship Action Foundation and Eunomia State of the States Report 2021

⁷ The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of Containers and Packaging Recycling Rates 2021

⁸ Glass Packaging Institute 2024

⁹ Eunomia: The 50 States of Recycling: A State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates 2023/2024
<https://www.ball.com/sustainability/real-circularity/50-states-of-recycling>

¹⁰ Maryland State Highway Administration, Litter Removal, Cost of Litter,
<https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/index.aspx?PageId=358> (accessed February 2026)

beverage container recycling refunds and are now implementing complementary deposit return systems alongside their packaging programs.¹¹ Deposit return systems help capture more materials and cleaner commodity streams, especially for containers consumed away from home and curbside recycling programs. Recycling refund programs help capture highly recyclable beverage containers that might otherwise be wasted or littered to feed demand for high quality recycled materials.

Marylanders take great pride in our natural environment and are fed up with litter. Marylanders are concerned about litter's health impacts and contribution to microplastic loading in the environment. SB342 is a modern recycling refund program based on proven policies that are effective, equitable, and supported by the public. We look forward to working with you on this exciting and highly impactful policy.

For all of the reasons outlined above, Waterkeepers Chesapeake and the below signed organizations urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB342.

Sincerely,

Robin Broder, Acting Executive Director
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
robin@waterkeeperschesapeake.org

Alice Volpitta, Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper
Blue Water Baltimore
avolpitta@bluewaterbaltimore.org

Evan Isaacson, Senior Attorney, Director of Research
Chesapeake Legal Alliance
evan@chesapeakelegal.org

Elle Bassett, South, West, & Rhode Riverkeeper
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Theaux LeGardeur, Executive Director & Riverkeeper
Gunpowder Riverkeeper
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Brent Walls, Upper Potomac Riverkeeper
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
brent@potomacriverkeeper.org

¹¹ The Status of EPR-PPP and DRS Around the World, Container Recycling Institute, https://www.container-recycling.org/images/2025/CRI_EPR-DRS_Factsheet_May_21_2025.pdf

Taylor Swanson, Executive Director & Assateague Coastkeeper
Assateague Coastal Trust
taylor@actforbays.org

Trey Sherard, Anacostia Riverkeeper
trey@anacostiariverkeeper.org

Surfrider MD Bottle Bill Testimony Senate Hearing

Uploaded by: Matt Gove

Position: FAV



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
Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

SB 342 - CBF - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 342

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Date: February 10, 2026

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Matt Stegman,
Maryland Staff Attorney

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 342** would set up a recycling refund program for beverage containers to reduce one of the most prevalent sources of litter in Maryland. This is a tried-and-true method of litter reduction, and SB 342 applies lessons learned from other successful state programs.

Most plastic beverage containers in Maryland are not recycled, and current disposal processes worsen human and environmental health:

Although recycling programs have existed in Maryland for many years, less than one-quarter of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in the state in 2019 were recycled and reused.¹ The remaining 4 billion containers were landfilled, incinerated, or littered. This is a large waste of resources, as virgin plastic requires large amounts of fossil fuels, the extraction and burning of which result in higher greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. Incineration of plastic bottles also worsens Maryland's air quality, releasing nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and other pollutants that impact human health and affect the acidity and balance of our Chesapeake Bay.²

Plastic beverage bottles contribute to microplastic pollution and environmental damages:

Contrary to the popular belief that plastic pollution largely ends up in the ocean, most of the plastic pollution that makes its way into the rivers of the Chesapeake Bay stays in and along local waters. Indeed, about 94% of microplastics – particles measuring 5 millimeters or less in diameter – that feed into the system via its rivers stay in the system, with an additional 5% carried to the ocean and 1% remaining in the water column.³

Microplastics threaten the health of the biodiversity that lives within the Bay watershed. For example, microplastics can physically block or fill up an animal's gut, potentially reducing its ability or desire to feed. Microplastics can also cause behavioral changes as their presence changes a fish's buoyancy or swimming behavior, which can make the fish more susceptible to predators. Microplastics also can carry toxic chemicals into the fish's body, which could bioaccumulate as the fish consumes other prey that have

¹ Container Recycling Institute, 2022. "2019 Beverage Market Data Analysis."

² "CBF Study: Baltimore Incinerator Causes \$55 Million in Health Problems per Year." *Chesapeake Bay Foundation*, 11 Dec. 2017, [Study: Baltimore Trash Incinerator Causes \\$55 Million in Health Problems | Chesapeake Bay Magazine](#)

³ Pipkin, Whitney. "The Chesapeake Bay Is a 'Sink' for Plastic Pollution." *Bay Journal*, Bay Journal Media, 13 Oct. 2021, https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/the-chesapeake-bay-is-a-sink-for-plastic-pollution/article_ca6f12ec-21fd-11ec-b0c4-cf096494dd62.html.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

ingested plastics, and eventually make its way to human consumption.⁴ All of these factors threaten the health of our ecosystem, as well as threaten the longevity and safety of Maryland's seafood industry.

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter:

Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs (California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Vermont).⁵ Together, they average a 60% recycling rate for beverage containers, compared to 24% in states without these programs.⁶ The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is much higher than for containers not subject to a deposit, and it increases with a higher deposit amount. The two states that offer a 10-cent redemption refund, Michigan and Oregon, have the highest beverage bottle recycling rates in the nation, reaching 73%⁷ and 87% recycling rates in 2023⁸, respectively.

Beverage container deposit programs make financial sense for our local and state governments.:

Beverage container deposit programs do not add cost burdens to our state, but rather can provide significant savings, which is especially important considering Maryland's budget constraints. Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection, processing, and recycling of beverage containers currently disposed, littered, and recycled, diverting materials from landfills and incinerators, saving costs for taxpayers and local governments. The reduction of disposed materials is critical, as Maryland counties are dedicating much time and resources to extend the capacity of their almost-full landfills.⁹

Recycling is also beneficial for job creation in the state. Indeed, deposit programs create 11 to 38 times more jobs than a curbside recycling system for beverage containers and at least five times more jobs in container collection, sorting, and transport than in garbage collecting, hauling and landfilling.¹⁰

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 342. For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

⁴ Pipkin, Whitney. "Picture of Chesapeake Microplastics Grows Clearer." *Bay Journal*, Bay Journal Media, 7 June 2021, https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/picture-of-chesapeake-microplastics-grows-clearer/article_87bd3606-c3e1-11eb-bdc4-4f1a3864c6f9.html.

⁵ "Redemption Rates and Other Features of 10 U.S. State Deposit Programs." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/images/Allstates/10-state%20Summary%208-5-22r.pdf>.

⁶ "Bottle Bills", Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.container-recycling.org/index.php/issues/bottle-bills>.

⁷ "Michigan." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/michigan>.

⁸ "Oregon." *Bottle Bill Resource Guide*, Container Recycling Institute, <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/oregon>.

⁹ "Olszewski Announces Plans to Consider Vertical Expansion of Eastern Sanitary Landfill to Extend Site Longevity by up to 20 Years." *Olszewski Announces Plans to Consider Vertical Expansion of Eastern Sanitary Landfill to Extend Site Longevity by up to 20 Years | Baltimore County Government*, Baltimore County Government, 22 Jan. 2024, www.baltimorecountymd.gov/county-news/2024/01/22/olszewski-announces-plans-to-consider-vertical-expansion-of-eastern-sanitary-landfill-to-extend-site-longevity-by-up-to-20-years.

¹⁰ "Fact Sheet: Deposit Return Systems Create More Jobs." *ReLoop*, 5 Feb. 2021, www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/DRS-Factsheet-Jobs-5FEB2021.pdf.

SB0342 FAV MSchweisguth Bottle Bill 260206.pdf

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV

Melissa A Schweisguth
Hyattsville, MD 20782

February 6, 2026

Re: FAVORABLE position on SB0342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee members,

Thank you for your service to the State of Maryland. I am writing to ask that the committee provide a favorable report on SB0342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, and support its passage in the Senate and General Assembly.

SB0342 would solve two persistent and widespread problems that have negative environmental and economic impacts: littering and lack of recycling of single use-beverage containers (e.g. plastic water and soda bottles, beer bottles, cans).

I live in District 22, where I have adopted a trail with my local watershed group, lead and carry out trail clean ups, and run and bike across the extensive trail system spanning Prince George's and Montgomery counties. Discarded single-use beverage containers are the most common item collected in every cleanup. They dot the trails, river and streambank, and roads throughout my area and the state, too. Beverage containers are one of the most common litter items in the . The Anacostia Watershed Society's Anacostia River trash traps, which capture litter from my watershed. Plastic bottles are especially concerning as they break into tiny "microplastics" that contaminate the environment and enter our food chain when animals ingest them.

Data indicate that less than one-quarter of beverage containers sold in Maryland are recycled; only about 1.2 billion (23 percent) of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland annually are recycled while 4 billion are wasted—landfilled, littered or incinerated. This results in negative climate and environmental impacts due to continued use of virgin materials, as well as the impacts of incineration (e.g., toxic ash) and landfilling (e.g., methane)

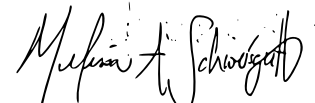
SB0342 helps solve these problems by creating a refundable deposit system, wherein consumers pay a small deposit (10 or 15 cents) when they purchase beverages, and can get the deposit back when they return containers for recycling. The proposed system includes conveniently located return facilities, a Stewardship Organization representing the container industry, and a Plan that would be approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MDE would oversee the program and provide enforcement, with input from an Advisory Council. The House ENT amended the Bill last year to provide for reimbursement to municipal and private operators that expressed concerns about losing revenue due to reduced collection of eligible containers, addressing the only substantive point of opposition in prior years. The 2026 bill retains this amendment.

The proposed deposit system is a proven model: ten states, covering about 90 million people, have well-established deposit programs with high success rates. According to data provided by the Maryland Sierra Club, programs with at least a 10-cent deposit recover up to 90 percent of containers for reuse or recycling, more than triple Maryland's beverage container recycling rate. The proposed deposit program is cost-effective as it provides an incentive for consumers to maximize recycling and would leverage beverage industry funding to run the program, avoiding increased costs for the government. It would reduce the cost of collecting, recycling, landfilling and incinerating beverage containers, provide high quality recycled materials for container manufacturing, stimulate recycling markets and investments in deposit systems, improve water quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

For these reasons, I enthusiastically support SB0342 and ask that the committee return a favorable report and support its passage in the Senate and General Assembly.

Thank you for considering my comments on this important measure.

Sincerely,



Melissa A. Schweisguth

Testimony FAV SB0342 Container Recycling NNWB 0210

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 4314
Silver Spring, MD 20914

February 6, 2026

Re: FAVORABLE position on SB0342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee members,

Thank you for your service to the State of Maryland. I am writing on behalf of Neighbors of the Northwest Branch (NNWB), a local nonprofit dedicated to restoring the health of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. We work to ensure that this urban treasure can be safely enjoyed by wildlife and residents in Montgomery and Prince George's county and beyond.

NNWB takes a FAVORABLE position on SB0342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. We respectfully ask that you issue a favorable committee report and continue to support it through passage.

SB0342 would help solve two major problems: littering and lack of recycling of single-use beverage containers (e.g., plastic water and soda bottles, beer bottles, cans), which have negative environmental and economic impacts. As we know from the many clean ups we have led and the time we spend enjoying the watershed, discarded single-use beverage containers are common due to littering or unintentional loss from recycling bins and trucks. The Anacostia Watershed Society determined that beverage containers are one of the most common litter items in Anacostia watershed trash traps, amounting to about half of the litter these traps collect. Plastic bottles break into tiny toxic particles (microplastics) that contaminate soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals ingest them. An effective container deposit program will have a substantial impact on protecting and restoring the health and beauty of our local rivers, streams, communities, parks, and natural areas by reducing litter.

Data indicate that less than one-quarter of beverage containers sold in Maryland are recycled, resulting in continued use of virgin materials, which has negative impacts on the environment and climate and translates into wasted energy and the loss of jobs and other economic benefits supported by recycling. Of the 5.2 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland annually, only 1.2 billion (23 percent) are recycled while 4 billion are wasted—landfilled, littered or incinerated.

SB0342 addresses these problems by creating a statewide deposit and return system with a small deposit (10 or 15 cents) that consumers would pay when they purchase beverages and then receive back when they return beverage containers for recycling. SB0342 provides for the establishment of efficient, conveniently located redemption facilities with measures to prevent fraud, a Stewardship Organization representing producers that sell beverage containers in Maryland, and a Plan approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MDE would provide oversight and enforcement, with input from an Advisory Council.

To mitigate economic impacts on existing recycling haulers, the stewardship organization will reimburse public and private material recovery facilities for unredeemed redeemable containers they collect, and MDE must consult with local governments to assess the impacts of the program on litter, recycling operations, and municipal budgets and make recommendations to address them.

The proposed deposit system is a proven model: ten states, covering about 90 million people, have long standing, successful beverage container deposit programs. Data indicate that programs with at least a 10-cent refundable deposit recover as much as 90 percent of used beverage containers for reuse or recycling—nearly four times Maryland’s current beverage container recycling rate. When program targets are achieved, it will generate an additional 11,300 tons of aluminum, 44,000 tons of PET plastic, 3,200 tons of HDPE plastic, and 140,900 tons of glass materials to be recycled into new containers.

The approach that SB0342 proposes is cost effective as it leverages beverage industry funding to launch and maintain the program, avoiding increased costs for the government, and provides an incentive for consumers to maximize recycling. Moreover, it would reduce the costs of collecting, recycling, landfilling and incinerating beverage containers for governments and consumers, provide high quality, food-grade recycled content that can be made into new containers, stimulate regional recycling markets, improve water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, and drive investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems and create jobs, as recycling programs generate five times more jobs than landfilling.

For these reasons, NNWB endorses SB0342 and asks that the committee return a favorable report and support its passage in the Senate and General Assembly. SB0342 is a win-win and a positive return on investment for governments, consumers and producers.

Thank you for considering NNWB’s comments on this important measure.

Sincerely,

Deborah Briceland-Betts
President, Neighbors of the Northwest Branch
www.neighborsnwb.org

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAVSB342_.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

SB342

**Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 342**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 342 establishes a beverage container recycling refund program designed to significantly increase the reuse and recycling of bottles and cans, while also reducing litter, pollution, and cleanup expenses for Maryland communities. By requiring beverage producers to register with the Department of the Environment, contribute a modest fee, and participate in a stewardship organization, the program ensures that producers take on an appropriate share of responsibility for the environmental impacts of the products they bring to market.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that caring for our common home is not optional—it is a moral obligation rooted in gratitude, stewardship, and justice. Today, beverage container waste has become one of the most visible and destructive threats to God's creation. Plastic bottles and aluminum cans fill our rivers and streams, harm wildlife, pollute our neighborhoods, and strain local waste systems. This is not simply an environmental concern but a matter of human dignity and public health, especially for communities already disproportionately burdened by pollution.

As consumption of bottled water and other beverages continues to rise, so does the urgency of meaningful action. Recycling alone is not enough—we must create systems that reduce waste at the source, encourage responsible consumption, and ensure producers share responsibility for the environmental impact of their products. This legislation does exactly that by fostering partnerships with the very industries whose materials contribute to the problem, moving us from reaction to prevention.

Recycling initiatives like this are not just beneficial, they are necessary. They protect our waterways, reduce plastic pollution, conserve resources, and help safeguard the beauty and integrity of our state for future generations. This bill serves as a practical expression of our call to care for creation and a concrete step toward restoring balance, justice, and sustainability in Maryland.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 342**.

Story of Stuff

Uploaded by: Miriam Gordon

Position: FAV



February 10, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Favorable Support for SB 342, An act creating the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, with suggested changes.

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the The Story of Stuff Project to express our strong support for SB 342 which will establish a refundable deposit on beverage containers and result in higher recycling rates and bringing reusable beverage containers back to the beverage industry. The Story of Stuff Project is a national U.S. based nonprofit organization with more than a million Changemakers worldwide, including nearly 1,000 supporters in the state of Maryland. Our mission is to change the way we make, use, and throw away all the Stuff in our lives.

It's time for Maryland to have a bottle bill! With only about a quarter of the more than 5.5 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland collected for recycling, 4 billion one-way beverage containers litter roadways, pollute the environment with microplastics, and are burned or buried, wasting precious resources. It's time to address the beverage container waste stream more seriously. *The state has been considering adopting a deposit to beverage containers since the 1970s.* Bottle deposits are the best way to ensure that beverage containers get returned for recycling and don't become litter. States with bottle bills that have high enough deposits (10 cents) and convenient return options have reached 90% return rates.¹ A beverage container deposit return program is long overdue in Maryland.

The beverage industry, which claims they want "every bottle back," has been fighting bottle bills for over 50 years.² Ever since the 1960s when the industry moved out of refillable bottles into single-use aluminum and then plastic, our streets and rivers started to become littered. The fight for responsible management of beverage containers has been going on since the 1970s, but due to industry opposition, only 10 states have succeeded in enacting bottle bills to date. If the American beverage industry (valued at \$170 billion for non-alcoholic beverages³ and \$17 billion for alcoholic beverages⁴) was serious about wanting *every bottle back* they would support these bills and help ensure that the best in class return systems are established. The truth is that,

¹ <https://www.bottlebill.org/index.php/current-and-proposed-laws/usa/additional-links>

² The "Every Bottle Back" initiative is a collaborative campaign launched in 2019 by America's leading beverage companies - Coca-Cola Company, Keurig Dr Pepper and PepsiCo —<https://cocacolaunited.com/blog/2019/10/31/top-us-beverage-companies-unite-for-every-bottle-back-initiative/>

³<https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/u-s-non-alcoholic-beverages-market-107932#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20non%20alcoholic%20beverages,U.S.%20non%20alcoholic%20beverages%20market>

⁴ <https://www.statfacts.com/outlook/us-alcoholic-beverage-market>

despite being so profitable, they'd rather pay lobbyists to fight bottle bills than pay a little money to retailers and recyclers to establish successful recycling programs.

Affordability? We can't afford NOT to have a bottle bill. The proposed 10 cent deposit is fully refundable. Research shows that at 10 cents, with a convenient collection system, states can achieve a 90% return rate- meaning most people get their money back. It's not a tax. Not having a refundable deposit system that reduces litter and plastic entering the environment results in enormous burdens - *essentially taxing our communities with the costs of litter, waste management, and the adverse health impacts of plastics and associated chemicals.*

When empty beverage containers can be redeemed for cash, few are littered or likely to remain littered. According to the Container Recycling Institute, a deposit program in Maryland would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles. These are just some of the costs that a beverage container deposit system will reduce:

- **Roadside litter spending-** the Maryland Department of Transportation and State Highway Administration reported that in 2024, MDOT SHA spent over \$17 million on cleaning up litter from state highways, with total expenditures exceeding \$68 million over the past five years.⁵ Municipalities spend millions more. Baltimore City alone spends over \$32 million annually to collect over 2,600 tons of litter.⁶
- **The costs of stormwater control-** as a result of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement, local governments are already spending too much money controlling trash entering Maryland waterways- *half of which is beverage containers* according to data from the Anacostia Watershed Society.⁷
- **Solid waste spending.** Maryland cities and counties are spending significant, multi-million dollar amounts on solid waste management, with budgets in major jurisdictions exceeding \$100 million annually, based on 2025 and 2026 budgets.⁸ The cost to recycle paper and other packaging prior to producer responsibility was \$406,433,000⁹- this doesn't include the costs of landfill and incineration of waste and other types of waste, including organics, construction, and textile waste.
- **The economic impacts of microplastics' harm to human health-** a recent study published in the *Journal of the Endocrine Society* estimates the health care costs attributable to chemicals in plastics in the United States are on the order of \$250 billion/year, or 1.22% of our gross domestic product.¹⁰ Another peer-reviewed review of

⁵ <https://roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/index.aspx?PageId=358>

⁶ <https://mayor.baltimorecity.gov/news/press-releases/2022-11-21-city-baltimore-files-first-its-kind-lawsuit-against-tobacco-companies#:~:text=Every%20year%2C%20millions%20of%20cigarette,the%20cost%20of%20cigarette%20cleanup.>

⁷ [Anacostia Riverkeeper \(2023\) Anacostia River Trash Mitigation Report, p.8](#)

⁸ [Montgomery County](#): The approved FY26 operating budget for Recycling and Resource Management is \$192.1 million, a 24% increase from FY25 (\$154.8 million). [Prince George's County](#): The FY25 approved Solid Waste Management Enterprise Fund budget for the Department of the Environment is \$125.2 million. [Baltimore County](#): The Department of Public Works and Transportation's FY25 proposed budget for waste-related services includes \$193.5 million.

⁹ [MDEP \(2025\) Maryland Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment](#), p.111

¹⁰ [Trasande L, Krithivasan R, Park K, Obsekov V, Belliveau M. Chemicals used in plastic materials: an estimate of the attributable disease burden and costs in the United States. J Endocr Soc. 2024;8\(2\):bvad163.](#)

the health and economic impacts of plastic pollution in the highly respected *Lancet* Journal:

Plastics are a grave, growing, and under-recognised danger to human and planetary health. Plastics cause disease and death from infancy to old age and are responsible for health-related economic losses exceeding US \$1.5 trillion annually. These impacts fall disproportionately upon low-income and at-risk populations. The principal driver of this crisis is accelerating growth in plastic production—from 2 megatonnes (Mt) in 1950, to 475 Mt in 2022 that is projected to be 1200 Mt by 2060. Plastic pollution has also worsened, and 8000 Mt of plastic waste now pollutes the planet.¹¹

Given the linked and increasing crises of climate change and plastic pollution, action to collect single-use beverage containers for recycling and to transition to reusable beverage containers is long overdue. **By targeting 10% reuse and ensuring that there is funding to establish reuse infrastructure this bill recognizes the myriad benefits of bringing back reusable beverage containers.** In the 1960s, the beverage industry in the U.S. made the switch from reusable bottles that it collected, washed and refilled, to single-use cans and bottles that became a waste stream local government and communities had to deal with. But this isn't true in much of the world. Refillable beverage containers are still used by the beverage industry in 170 countries worldwide with reusables representing an overall market share of 23% by volume globally.¹² Most of the top 10 global non-alcoholic beverage markets, including China, Mexico, Indonesia, India, Brazil, Germany, and Turkey have reusable market shares ranging from 26% - 61%.¹³

Recycling alone isn't enough. Globally, more than 580 billion polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic beverage bottles are produced each year – *nearly 1 million per minute*, which accounts for one-quarter of the world's use of PET plastic. Transitioning to reusable bottles is imperative to reduce materials, water, waste, and climate impacts. Reuse can reduce up to 40% of raw materials inputs and 50% of greenhouse gas emissions associated with beverage packaging. It also achieves lower water and waste impacts. Coca-Cola's Universal PET bottle compared to a single-use bottle was found to reduce carbon emissions up to 47% and the water footprint by 45%. After a third use, reusable glass bottles are already less impactful than single-use glass, PET or aluminum cans. Used 25 times and then recycled, reusable glass bottles create 85% fewer climate emissions than single-use glass; 57% fewer than aluminum cans; and 70% fewer than single-use PET.¹⁴

Reusables also benefit the ocean and local water waterways. *Oceana estimates that a 10% increase in the share of beverages sold in reusables could result in a 22% decrease in marine plastic pollution, keeping 4.5 to 7.6 billion plastic bottles out of the ocean each year.*

Suggestions to Improve the Reuse Provisions of the bill. We support this bill as is, however, if the author and committee members wish to see reuse succeed in the state, a best in class

¹¹ **The Lancet Countdown on health and plastics**, Landrigan, Philip J et al., *The Lancet*, Volume 406, Issue 10507, 1044 - 1062 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(25\)01447-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(25)01447-3/fulltext)

¹² [Oceana \(2023\). Refill Again.](#)

¹³ [Reloop \(2021\) What We Waste.](#)

¹⁴ [Coelho, P., Corona, B., Worell, E. \(2020\). Reusable vs. single-use packaging: a review of environmental impacts. Reloop and Zero Waste Europe](#)

version of the reuse targets would make the following changes:

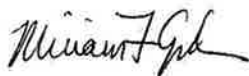
1. Updated definitions for reusable beverage containers, making a clear distinction between *returnable reusables*, which are returned to producers or third party service providers for professional cleaning and recirculation (for example, a reusable beer bottle returned to a redemption center and transported back to a brewery), and *refillables*, which are owned by consumers and are not subject to deposits (for example, a growler refilled by a consumer at a local brewery).
2. Without penalties for failure to achieve the target reuse rates, there is virtually no accountability built into the reuse requirement.
3. Requirements for reverse vending machines and redemption centers to accept returnable reusables wherever recyclables are accepted, without crushing reusable glass containers.
4. Allowances for producers choosing returnable reusables to increase the deposit on these containers if they wish (to ensure they get them back).
5. A requirement for the beverage stewardship organization and Maryland's packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) producer responsibility organization (PRO) to coordinate so that reuse outcomes across both programs are optimized.
6. A requirement that retailers provide shelf space for reusable beverage containers to ensure that consumers have equal access to reusables alongside single-use containers.

The Single-Use Plastic Problem Necessitates Immediate Action. Single-use plastic beverage containers pollute our waterways and pose a threat to wildlife and human health. As described in the cited plastics articles, plastics are invading our lives. Micro and nano plastics are in the air we breathe, water we drink, and food we eat. They are found in all the major organs of the human body, including the brain at an average of 10 micrograms- or two teaspoons- of plastic are present. While we don't fully understand the impacts to human health- it clearly does not belong in our bodies or in the crops we grow and water we drink.

Increasing recycling and adding refillables is good for Maryland's economy. The beverage deposit program would shift the financial burden of managing beverage container waste from local governments to the producers of beverages that profit from selling beverages. Recycling generated from that deposit program is estimated to create 5 times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration. Reuse creates even more jobs as additional jobs are created for sorting and washing refillable beverage bottles.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote AYE on this important measure. Please feel free to contact me at miriam@storyofstuff.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Miriam Gordon
Reuse Program Director
miriam@storyofstuff.org

Favorable Report_QVM_SB342.pdf

Uploaded by: Molly Finch

Position: FAV

Favorable Report: SB0342 Quaker Voice of Maryland

Quaker Voice of Maryland

TO: Chair Feldman and Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

FROM: John McKusick, Quaker Voice of Maryland

DATE: February 6, 2026

Quaker Voice of Maryland, an advocacy group representing Quakers throughout Maryland, strongly supports SB0342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

Thank you, Chairman Feldman, for the opportunity to testify, and thank you, Senator Brooks for sponsoring this legislation. My name is John McKusick and I am writing on behalf of Quaker Voice of Maryland to urge your support of SB0342. I reside in District 43. I retired from a career in student services at Towson University in 2017 after working for ten years at CCBC. I have been a volunteer for environmental causes for much of my adult life.

As a regular volunteer with environmental organizations like Blue Water Baltimore, I have worked on many stream cleanup projects that collected large quantities of plastic, metal, and glass. It is a feel-good job that delivers the satisfaction one anticipates from completing a useful community supporting activity. However, that good feeling doesn't last long when behaviors don't change and the site is quickly recontaminated.

This is why I love SB0342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy to recover used beverage containers and reduce litter. They are simple, straightforward, and understandable in design and structure. The bill's goals include a ninety percent redemption rate! To me, that means I will be picking up less plastic, metal, and glass in my neighborhood streams. Our waterways will be less littered and much healthier as a result.

We represent Quakers throughout Maryland to advocate for state-level policies based on testimonies of peace, equality, and stewardship. We are committed to both pragmatic and spiritual approaches to "seeking a world renewed". A Maryland bottle bill would be an effective way to care for the earth. **We urge a favorable report for SB0342.**

Sincerely,

John McKusick

Quaker Voice of Maryland

410-830-9225 john.ca.mckusick@verizon.net or quakervoicemd@gmail.com

SB0342-EEE-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB342

February 10, 2026

TO: Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 342 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee Education, Energy and Environment Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 342.

SB342 establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase reuse and recycling of beverage containers. By providing the infrastructure for the stewardship of beverage containers, this bill supports local governments with meeting waste reduction goals and preventing post-consumer waste from entering the environment, especially our waterways. Beverage containers covered under the bill include glass, aluminum and plastic bottles. The bill specifies a goal to achieve a 90% redemption rate in the first decade of implementation. This equates to an astounding 5.2 billion single-use beverage containers that can be diverted from waste streams across Maryland. Though the exact number that would benefit Baltimore City is not known, this target will have significant impacts on the city's waste management strategies that divert and prevent waste. SB342 holds the prospect of reducing the cost of litter and beverage containers collection, recycling and disposal currently imposed on Baltimore City taxpayers.

Programming outlined in the bill also aligns with a goal in the 2019 Sustainability Plan to in our Waste and Recycling, Water in the Environment, and waste reduction goals in Mayor Scott's Term 1 Action Plan.

Waste and Recycling Chapter

- Strategy 1: Pursue legislative and policy changes to reduce the waste stream.
 - Action 1: Enact legislation to impose a fee for plastic bags, and support state legislation instituting beverage container deposits.

- Action 3: Create and implement a plan to achieve zero waste, meaning we “are working toward or diverting over 90 percent of our discards from landfilling or incineration.” Ensure extensive outreach and a plan that addresses the needs of the entire population.

Water in the Environment Chapter

- Strategy 2: Improve aquatic habitats by increasing riparian restoration and water quality monitoring, and creating policies to eliminate sources of pollution.
- Action 4: Develop and promote legislation and policy at the City and State level to reduce pollution of our waterways, including restricting the use of pesticides and herbicides and reducing the use of single-use plastics (such as plastic bags and beverage bottles).

Non-recyclable materials like plastic bags, polystyrene containers, and beverage containers make up as much as half of the litter polluting local streets and waterways. In 2018, the City Council passed a ban on polystyrene containers for carryout food and drinks by a unanimous vote, the Baltimore City Public School Board voted to phase out Styrofoam trays from school cafeterias in favor of compostable trays and in October 2021 Baltimore City passed a plastic bag ban.

A 2020 [litter characterization study](#) conducted by Keep America Beautiful found that an estimated 75% of litter nationally stems from fast food items such as paper cups, paper bags, or other food-related paper products and the remaining 25% of litter consists of plastic items – including plastic bottles, wrappers, utensils or other plastic food ware. Though many single-use items are utilized by consumer for minutes – disposable cups, plastic bags and bottles, can persist in our environment for decades, even centuries. Non-recyclable materials ranging from plastic bags to polystyrene containers, and beverage containers make up as much as half of the litter polluting local streets and waterways. These realities help frame solutions designed to curb litter across our city.

These bills have proven themselves to be effective waste prevention, behavior change and zero waste planning tools for local governments. An estimated 80% reduction in foam containers and 70% reduction in plastic bags were observed during waste sorts conducted among the family of Trash Wheels across the city.

Funding outlined in this bill poses two reimbursement schemes that may warrant additional review to support municipalities that collect recycling and haul to a private MRF to be processed. However, when implemented, the proposed bottle bill will help regulate post-consumer waste across the state, aid local governments with litter prevention/reduction allowing Maryland to shift from waste as a liability to waste as an asset; a way to create good paying, local jobs tied to a workforce development pipeline.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB342.

SB342 Ramos Testimony EEE 2.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Odette Ramos

Position: FAV



Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman

District 14

(410) 396 - 4814

odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 553

Baltimore MD 21202

**SB342- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Fund and Litter Reduction Program
February 10, 2026
FAVORABLE**

Honorable Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing to urge your support of **SB342 The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would add a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The bill outlines that the program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit Stewardship Organization, not by the City or its residents. The Maryland Department of the Environment will provide strong oversight.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it would capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, diverting an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing pollution from littered plastic bottles that break down in the environment and get washed into the Chesapeake Bay. Recent polling has found that more than 90% of Maryland's voting public would support the Bottle Bill.

This bill is critical for Baltimore City. Our recycling rate is about 20%, and so to increase recycling materials to meet our own zero waste goals, and make sure to address the following:

- **Avoid landfill expansion.** We are running out of room in our landfill. Expansion of the landfill would cost substantial capital costs that we could be using to invest in our infrastructure.
- **Shut down the Baltimore incinerator.** By diverting bottles and cans from the waste stream, the amount of waste to the incinerator is reduced, thus making it easier to close the incinerator. The incinerator is one of the leading causes of cancer and other health problems to areas in our city.
- **Reduce in litter.** Residents would either keep their bottles and cans to redeem another time, or residents would pick up any bottles and cans that were littered on the ground so they can redeem the deposit.

Please pass a favorable report for SB342.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached on 410-396-4814 or via email at odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos, Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

SB0342 Winston Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Pamela Winston

Position: FAV

2/6/26

I am a 25-year resident of Montgomery County. I am writing to express my strong support for SB0342, the “Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.” The program will go a long way to help the state reduce littering and plastic pollution, much needed as we see increasing amounts of bottles, cans, and other trash overwhelm our roads, forests, and waterways. Please, please take this common sense step forward, as other states have.

Thank you,

Pamela Winston

8005 Glenside Drive

Takoma Park, MD 20912

Hearing before the Senate Education^J Energy^J and

Uploaded by: Patricia Bodine

Position: FAV

Hearing before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
February 10, 2026

Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on
SB 342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Sirs,

MCCH would like to express its strong support for the passage of House Bill 232, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, the “Bottle Bill.” I co-lead a group that picks up litter four times a year in the same area around a gas station in Frederick, Md. We pick up at least six 30-gallon bags full of trash every time. Most of it is drink containers. These are a wasted resource and add to carbon dioxide production, warming our planet. I say “wasted resource” because they can be recycled into usable containers again. If our team didn’t pick them up, they would continue to pollute the land and our precious water.

Enacting this bill will protect land, air and water. It will also:

- Capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, thereby increasing the rate of recycling in the state from 25 percent of containers to more than 90 percent.
- Increase the availability of high-quality recycled feedstock, as the program under this bill is projected to generate annually an additional 13,328 tons of aluminum, 47,665 tons of PET plastic, 7,847 tons of HDPE plastic, and 159,397 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions—231,707 metric tons of CO₂-equivalent air emissions would be eliminated each year, as a result of not having to produce new cans and bottles from virgin materials. This is comparable to removing the emissions of over 50,000 cars.
- Benefit taxpayers and local governments, as they currently pay for disposal of beverage containers in our landfills and incinerators. These costs will be reduced because beverage containers will be diverted from landfills and incinerators. Fees from beverage producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties will finance the costs of collection and processing of beverage containers by a nonprofit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization, not by local governments.

- Create jobs through investments in new refillable and reusable beverage container systems. The recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration.¹

At one time Maryland had a bottle refund program. I used to accompany my parents to the store where we collected our deposits on bottles. Now is the time to bring back the bottle bill and begin to realize the environmental, health, economic, and cultural benefits it will bring.

For these reasons I strongly urge your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration of my views and my respectful request for a favorable report on House Bill 232.

Sincerely,

Patricia Bodine
8120 Overlook Dr
Frederick, Md 21702

¹ Maryland Sierra Club, “Maryland Needs a Bottle Bill! HB 331/SB 342” [Fact Sheet], 2026.

¹ Maryland Sierra Club, “Maryland Needs a Bottle Bill! HB 331/SB 342” [Fact Sheet], 2026.

2026.02.10_Just Zero_Testimony in Support of SB 34

Uploaded by: Peter Blair

Position: FAV



February 10, 2026

Chair Feldman
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Maryland State Senate
2 West Miller
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 342 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Maryland Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 342.

Just Zero is a national environmental nonprofit advocacy organization that works in partnership with communities, policymakers, scientists, educators, and organizers to advance just and equitable solutions to climate-damaging and toxic production, consumption, and waste systems. We believe all people deserve Zero Waste solutions that deliver zero climate-damaging emissions and zero toxic exposures, while strengthening local economies and public health.

SB 342 creates a beverage container recycling refund program—commonly known as a Bottle Bill. Just Zero supports Bottle Bills because they are among the most effective tools available to reduce litter, dramatically increase recycling rates, create local jobs, and build the consumer behavior and infrastructure needed to support reuse and refill systems. If enacted, SB 342 would deliver significant environmental, economic, and community benefits for Maryland.

This testimony is organized into two sections. The first outlines the proven benefits of these programs, including their impact on litter reduction and recycling. The second addresses and responds to common arguments raised in opposition to Bottle Bill programs.

I. Bottle Bills Provide Significant Environmental and Economic Benefits

Bottle Bill programs unequivocally reduce litter, increase recycling, and create jobs. These programs also create the consumer culture and infrastructure necessary to shift away from single-use disposal beverage containers to reusable and refillable beverage systems. Importantly, through producer responsibility requirements, Bottle Bill programs provide these benefits while saving consumers and local governments money.

A. Litter Reduction

By placing a refundable deposit on every single-use beverage container sold in Maryland, consumers are incentivized to recycle their empty containers. This is extremely important



because most single-use beverages are consumed on-the-go outside of home which is why you see plastic beverage containers littering parks, streets, and streams, but not things like plastic peanut butter jars. Essentially, the refundable deposit creates an understanding that while you are buying the beverage, you are renting the container. This mental shift changes behavior and leads to a dramatic reduction of litter in the environment.

The success of litter reduction through this policy is evidenced in the ten states that have existing Bottle Bills. After Hawaii enacted a Bottle Bill program in 2005, the number of littered beverage containers collected around Hawaii’s waterways fell from 23,471 in 2004, to 8,200 in 2008—a 65% drop in just four years.¹ A 2020 study found that states without Bottle Bills have double the amount of beverage container litter than their Bottle Bill counterparts.² The report also found that states with Bottle Bills had less overall litter.³

Less litter doesn’t just mean cleaner, more vibrant communities, it also means less spending on clean-up efforts. Estimates show that the United States spends more than \$11 billion on litter clean up every year.⁴ In Maryland, residents spent \$17.7 million in 2024 on litter removal on state highways alone.⁵ That figure represents only a fraction of the true cost of litter as it does not include spending on county and local roads, waterways, parks, or other public spaces.

B. Increased Recycling of Beverage Containers

Though the ten Bottle Bill states only represent 27% of the U.S. population, they account for over 50% of all beverage containers recycled annually nationwide.⁶ On average, states with Bottle Bills have double the recycling rates than those that rely solely on curbside recycling programs.⁷ For plastic and glass bottles, Bottle Bill programs achieve recycling rates that are three times higher than single-stream recycling systems.⁸

While curbside recycling is convenient, contamination is a significant problem because it is operated as a single-stream. Single-stream recycling depends first and foremost on educated consumers making the right choice about what can and cannot go into the blue bin. Then the burden is on Material Recovery Facilities (“MRFs”) to remove any unrecyclable materials while also processing and sorting the commingled recyclables into distinct separate streams. These sorting processes are imperfect, so roughly 25% of what is placed into the single-stream recycling system ends up being too contaminated to go anywhere other than a landfill.⁹

¹ Haw. Dep’t of Health, [Report to the Twenty-Fifth Legislature 2010, Deposit Beverage Container Program](#), 6 (Dec. 2009).

² Keep America Beautiful, [2020 National Litter Study](#), 3 (May 2021).

³ *Id.*

⁴ Andrew Lisa, [It Costs Over \\$11 Billion Per Year to Clean Up Litter – How the Pandemic’s Effect on Trash Output May Make It Worse](#), Yahoo (April 22, 2021).

⁵ Maryland Department of Transportation, [Maryland State Highway Administration Litter Fact Sheet](#).

⁶ Marissa Heffernan, [Report: Bottle bill states recycle more, provide models](#), Resource Recycling (Jan. 2, 2024).

⁷ Container Recycling Institute, [U.S. Nominal Recycling Rates by Deposit Status](#) (2019).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Maggie Koerth, [The Era of Easy Recycling May be Coming to an End](#), FiveThirtyEight (Jan. 10, 2019).



Bottle Bill programs, on the other hand, evade contamination by properly sorting recyclable materials on the front end. This results in higher quality recycled material, significantly increasing its ability to be made into new products and avoiding downcycling. Downcycling is when material collected for recycling is used for purposes that fail to capture the full environmental and economic benefits associated with recycling. In the case of beverage containers, the highest and best use is bottle-to-bottle recycling, where containers are recycled directly into new beverage containers. Common examples of downcycling include turning plastic beverage containers into carpet and textiles and using glass beverage containers for road improvement projects or landfill cover. While these uses are preferential to disposing of the material, it still means the materials can only be used once as opposed to being recycled repeatedly.

Creating a standalone Bottle Bill program to collect and recycle beverage containers ensures that the materials are uncontaminated and able to be readily recycled. Moreover, Bottle Bill programs lead to higher overall recycling rates. Removing beverage containers from the residential recycling system allows municipalities and recycling operators to focus their efforts on capturing and recycling other less commonly recycled materials.¹⁰

C. Job Creation

Bottle Bills create good, local jobs. Reports show that Bottle Bills can create between 11 and 38 times more jobs than curbside recycling.¹¹ These jobs include technicians to service collection systems, storage systems, and sorting systems. Bottle Bills also create jobs associated with hauling beverage containers from redemption locations to centralized storage areas. Other indirect jobs associated with increased recycling and manufacturing of products from recycled materials are also created. A recent analysis of New York's Bottle Bill program found that it supports 5,700 jobs statewide.¹² In Massachusetts, a report found that the existing Bottle Bill system supports nearly 1,500 jobs related to returnable beverage containers, contributing significantly to the state's economy.¹³

D. Creating a Pathway to Reusable and Refillable Beverage Systems

Reusable and refillable systems are a straightforward way to reduce trash in the waste stream overall. Bottle Bill programs develop the infrastructure and consumer culture necessary to support reusable and refillable beverage systems. Historically, beverage companies relied on consumers to return bottles to be refilled. Because glass bottles were expensive to manufacture, refilling existing bottles meant savings for companies. To encourage refilling, beverage

¹⁰ Eunomia, [The 50 States of Recycling: a State-by-State Assessment of US Packaging Recycling Rates](#), 6 (Dec. 2023).

¹¹ Reloop, [Factsheet: Deposit Return Systems Create More Jobs](#), 2 (2022).

¹² Sarah Edwards, Eunomia Research and Consulting, Inc., [Employment and Economic Impact of Container Deposits](#), table E1 (Jan. 2019).

¹³ Container Recycling Institute, [Massachusetts Container Deposit Return System: Employment and Economic Impacts in the Commonwealth](#) (June 2017).



companies utilized a deposit-return program to ensure glass containers were brought back and refilled. Now, with the drastic change in production and consumer culture, global companies—which dominate the beverage market—no longer have a financial incentive to support refill systems. Voluntary programs don't work even when it is a program pushed by a government as shown in Oregon. When the state first launched a refillable beer bottle system through its Bottle Bill program, it initially reported a diversion of 407,840 bottles from recycling for reuse in 2019.¹⁴ Unfortunately the program has now stalled because it is entirely voluntary.

SB 342 shows that Maryland learned from Oregon's mistake by requiring at least 10% of all beverage containers sold in Maryland to be returned and refilled by December 31, 2034. Just Zero strongly supports this mandate because it is a necessary and achievable program goal as demonstrated by other countries. For example, in Germany, 82% of all beer is sold in reusable bottles, 99% of beer bottles are returned for reuse, and 54% of beverages sold in Germany are in reusables.¹⁵ In Brazil, Mexico, and Columbia, refillables account for 24%, 27%, and 54% of the beverage market share respectively.¹⁶ In Ontario, Canada, 84% of beer sold is in refillable bottles collected through the provinces Bottle Bill system.¹⁷

E. Bottle Bills Provide All These Benefits While Saving Residents and Communities Money.

Bottle Bill programs provide these benefits at no cost to consumers or the government. Instead, these programs place the financial responsibility on producers who are the entities creating this problem in the first place by producing and distributing single-use beverage containers. If a Bottle Bill program is developed in Maryland, cities, towns, and residents will no longer be stuck paying to collect, sort, and recycle all these containers. Instead, the large companies that manufacture them will.

II. **The Arguments Against the Bottle Bill Are Misguided and Unsupported.**

Over the last four years, opponents of the Bottle Bill have raised a familiar set of arguments that have been used in nearly every state considering a beverage container deposit program. These claims are not new, and they've been repeatedly examined and debunked.

A. The Bottle Bill is Not a Tax, and it Will Not Raise Prices.

Opponents often frame the Bottle Bill as a tax and argue that the program will raise the price of beverages. This is false. The deposit is fully refundable, and evidence from other states illustrates that when redemption is easy and convenient, the overwhelming majority of consumers choose to return their containers to get the deposit back.

¹⁴ Container Recycling Institute, [Exploring refillables in the United States](#), 2 (April 7, 2021).

¹⁵ Upstream, [Beverage Refill and the New Reuse Economy](#) (July 1, 2023).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*



Additionally, a number of studies analyzing global and U.S. markets show no evidence that Bottle Bills raise the non-deposit price of beverages. A 2023 study comparing beverage sales and prices before and after the introduction or expansion in Bottle Bill states found that there is no definitive evidence that Bottle Bills alone impact beverage sales or prices.¹⁸ Beverage sales and prices in jurisdictions with Bottle Bills are similar to neighboring jurisdictions without these systems, once broader market factors are accounted for.¹⁹ A 2011 study found that the impact of Bottle Bills on beverage prices and consumption was “essentially zero.”²⁰ A Massachusetts study found no discernable difference in price between beverages in states with and without Bottle Bills.²¹ In fact, the study found that beverages often cost more, not less, in states without Bottle Bills.²² Moreover, the study found that supermarkets with regional operations have remarkably consistent beverage pricing for both deposit and non-deposit beverages across states, regardless of whether the state has a Bottle Bill.²³

Finally, an economic analysis of the Bottle Bill in Australia in 2021 found that the impact of the program on the food and beverage industry is \$0.²⁴ While the study acknowledges that the program may impose initial start-up costs for these businesses, those costs were offset by the revenue generated from the recycled materials.²⁵

B. The Bottle Bill is Necessary and Will Work in Harmony with Maryland’s Existing Recycling System.

Opponents of SB 342 make two closely related—but fundamentally contradictory—arguments against establishing a Bottle Bill in Maryland. On the one hand, they claim the Bottle Bill is unnecessary because beverage containers are already being captured through Maryland’s existing curbside and residential recycling system. On the other hand, they argue that if a Bottle Bill were enacted, it would be devastating to the same recycling system by removing valuable materials and thereby depriving the system of critical revenue. In other words, opponents simultaneously argue that the program is unnecessary while also acknowledging that it would be highly effective.

In response to opponents’ first argument, the data is clear that Bottle Bill programs are necessary to improve recycling rates even with curbside collection. Maryland’s existing recycling system is failing when it comes to beverage containers. Despite the widespread availability of curbside

¹⁸ Reloop & The Container Recycling Institute, [The Impact of Deposit Return Systems on Beverage Sales](#), 8 (July 2023).

¹⁹ *Id.* at 8.

²⁰ Jim Dewey, [Analysis of a Florida Beverage Container Deposit Refund System](#), University of Florida – Bureau of Economic and Business Research (Mar. 15, 2011).

²¹ The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, [Comparison of Beverage Pricing, Consumer Choice and Redemption System Performance in Massachusetts and Neighboring States](#), 3. (July 2011)

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ Sarah Yanyue Yu, [An In Medias Res Economic Cost-Benefit Analysis of ACT Container Deposit Scheme](#), The Economic Society of Australia (Mar. 2021).

²⁵ *Id.*



recycling and public recycling receptacles, only about 25% of the approximately 5.5 billion beverage containers sold in Maryland are captured for recycling. This means more than 4 billion beverage containers are littered, burned in incinerators, or disposed of in landfills every year in Maryland. This is not a functioning or effective system for managing beverage containers.

Even the containers that are collected through curbside recycling are not being reliably recycled into new containers. In Maryland, the majority of glass collected through recycling programs is not actually recycled.²⁶ Instead, it is used as landfill cover or for roads.²⁷ Beverage containers made from glass, aluminum, and PET are among the most recyclable materials in the waste stream, yet Maryland's current system consistently fails to return them to productive use. Bottle Bills are the only policy mechanism that has been shown, repeatedly and across jurisdictions, to dramatically increase collection rates for beverage containers while producing clean, high-quality recyclable material.

As for opponents' second argument, SB 342 is specifically structured to ensure that the transition to a Bottle Bill does not harm Maryland's existing recycling system. The bill requires reimbursement to public and private MFRs for the collection, transportation, and processing costs associated with any beverage containers that continue to flow through the curbside system. Additionally, the policy landscape in Maryland has changed. In 2025, the legislature enacted an extended producer responsibility program for packaging and paper. This means that MRFs will be compensated for the full costs of recycling by producers, regardless of shifts in material composition. As a result, the old concern that removing certain materials from curbside recycling could raise costs for local governments no longer applies.

C. The Program is Not Complex and Can Be Successfully Implemented in Maryland Without Harming Retailers.

Opponents argue that the Bottle Bill will be overly complex and place an unreasonable burden on retailers, particularly those required to provide redemption services. Experience from other jurisdictions with Bottle Bills demonstrates that this concern is unfounded. Bottle Bills are neither novel nor untested having been implemented in more than 50 jurisdictions worldwide since 1970, and with new programs continuing to develop.²⁸ These jurisdictions all have grocery stores, convenience stores, tourism, complex economies, and modern retail sectors. Retailers in a wide range of markets have successfully integrated redemption services into their operations for decades. Today, more than 300 million people live in communities with Bottle Bill programs, a number that continues to grow.²⁹ Maryland retailers are just as capable in implementing a Bottle Bill system.

²⁶ Maryland Department of the Environment, [Maryland Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment](#), p. 6. (Feb. 21, 2025)

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ Reloop, [Global Deposit Book 2024: An Overview of Deposit Return Systems for Single-Use Beverage Containers](#), 108 (Dec. 2024).

²⁹ *Id.* at 13, 22, 72.



SB 342 is also specifically designed with Maryland retailers in mind providing flexibility in how retailers meet redemption requirements. The bill does not prescribe a one-size-fits-all model. Retailers may choose from multiple redemption options, including reverse vending machines, bag-drop systems, outdoor redemption units located in parking lots, or shared redemption systems with nearby retailers in common or centralized locations. This flexibility allows retailers to design redemption services that align with their store layout, surrounding community, staffing, and business model, rather than forcing a single operational approach.

The bill also ensures that retailers are fairly compensated for providing redemption services. Retailers receive a per-container handling fee, set by the Maryland Department of the Environment, to cover the costs associated with collecting, storing, and managing empty beverage containers, including investments in technology such as reverse vending machines where used. Retailers are also fully reimbursed for the deposits they refund to consumers. In other words, retailers are not expected to absorb the costs of the system. Instead, those costs are built into the program and paid through the producer-financed system.

In addition to direct compensation, evidence from Bottle Bill states and international programs shows that retailers offering redemption services often experience increased foot traffic and customer spending.³⁰ Consumers frequently return containers during shopping trips and use their deposit refunds toward in-store purchases, benefiting retailers rather than harming them.³¹

III. Conclusion

The time to act is now. This bill will improve recycling, create green jobs, and reduce litter which will protect Maryland's land, rivers, lakes, and oceans. With SB 342, Maryland can create a robust and effective Bottle Bill program that will protect the environment and strengthen the economy. We urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 342. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Blair, Esq.
Policy and Advocacy Director
Just Zero

³⁰ Clarissa Morawski, [Why Deposits Make Sense for Retailers](#), Resource Recycling (Sept. 2018).

³¹ TOMRA, [How Recycling Impacts Shopping Behavior](#) (Feb. 2023).

Testimony- SB 342 -Bottle Bill- Support-Phil Webst

Uploaded by: Phil Webster

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program The Maryland Bottle Bill

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee.
FROM: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate for the Climate
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
DATE: February 10, 2026

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **SB 342- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program - "The Maryland Bottle Bill."** We are a faith-based advocacy organization based on Unitarian Universalist (UU) Values, including Interdependence (honoring the interdependent web of all existence) and Justice (where all feel welcome and can thrive). Working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs.

"The Maryland Bottle Bill" aligns with both of the values by:

- a) Reducing the amount of carbon pollution by heavily supporting recycling in Maryland,
- b) Saving local jurisdictions money by diverting a waste stream away from expensive landfills,
- c) Reducing litter which tends to accumulate in lower and moderate income areas.

"The Maryland Bottle Bill" is a very sensible legislation. It is an easy, straightforward solution to reduce plastic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the energy needed to produce new beverage containers. The bill includes beverage containers that are bottles, cans, or other containers, but excludes cartons, pouches, 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) 70% beverage container redemption rate by December 31, 2030;
- 2) 90% redemption rate by December 31, 2033;
- 3) Attainment of all convenience standards identified by the MD Department of the Environment by December 31, 2028,
- 4) At least 10% of all beverage containers sold in the state are returned and refilled by December 31, 2038,

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd www.Twitter.com/uulmmd

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.

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. “**The Maryland Bottle Bill**” builds upon the legislation that was passed last year, to increase producer responsibility for packaging. “**The Maryland Bottle Bill**” would provide a high rate of return for containers by creating incentives for the development of refillable and reusable containers. This would create the circular and zero waste economy that will increase the cost-effectiveness of creating zero-waste or reusable containers. 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.

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, already have longstanding, successful programs.

The State of Maryland needs to protect our waterways and our beloved Chesapeake Bay from plastic pollution and litter. “**The Maryland Bottle Bill**” will accomplish this goal!

We urge a FAVORABLE report on **SB 342**.

Phil Webster, PhD

Lead Advocate for the Climate UULM-MD

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SB342_FAV_Detchon.pdf

Uploaded by: Reid Detchon

Position: FAV

SB 342 - SUPPORT

Reid Detchon

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SB 342 SUPPORT

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

February 10, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

I am a retired private citizen in Bethesda, a member of Third Act Maryland, and a member of the Creation Care Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington which includes 32 parishes in the District and 50 more in Maryland. **Third Act Maryland** is a volunteer organization that brings together over-60 adults who want to build a better future for our children and grandchildren – in this case, by reducing our human impact on the natural environment.

At St. Columba's Episcopal Church we have partnered on several occasions with the Ward 8 Woods Conservancy, an inspiring grassroots group that works to increase the health, beauty, and public enjoyment of urban forests east of the Anacostia River, on their monthly cleanup activities in the District and neighboring Prince George's County. It is shocking and dispiriting to see the bottle and can pollution in these areas, and while it is rewarding to see the results of a good clean-up, the size of the problem remains daunting. Speaking for myself, I see this work as a small personal form of reparations: We collectively created this problem, and we should work together to clean it up.

Why should we care? We are called by our faith to love God and love our neighbor. Loving God implies loving His creation and treating nature with love and respect. Loving our neighbor implies acting as a community to take care of our neighborhood environments as we would our own homes.

Street trash is a visual symbol of indifference to our surroundings and well-being. Additionally, bottles and cans are breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes and sources of microplastic contamination that harms birds and animals as well as ourselves. If SB 342 is enacted, it is expected that Maryland can recover more than 90% of now-discarded beverage containers, amounting to 3.5 billion fewer wasted containers a year.

In the District of Columbia, a hearing on the proposed Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Amendment Act of 2025 was held before the Council's Committee on Business and Economic Development on Oct. 1. No action was taken, but the bill was automatically re-referred to the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, from which it is expected to emerge this spring. It has 11 of the 13 Council members as cosponsors. Parallel action in the Maryland General Assembly would alleviate some cross-border concerns. Ten U.S. states already have a successful bottle bill: CA, CT, HI, IA, ME, MA, MI, NY, OR, and VT.

The proposed legislation you are considering today would help us to open our children's eyes to parks and woods as places to connect with the wonders of nature and not as trash dumps; and to our rivers as places of beauty and wildlife, not as toxic sewers to avoid.

The Episcopal Church is part of an international effort for prayer and action for climate justice and an end to environmental racism and ecological destruction. We cannot today resolve all the manmade threats to the natural world, but we can take this small step toward a more beautiful, healthful, and natural world.

I urge a favorable report on SB 342.

SB 342

Uploaded by: Richard Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0342_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/10/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0342- POSITION: FAVORABLE

**Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes
Accountability Act)**

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0342, **Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)**

Under the current Federal administration, the Environmental Protection Agency has decided to protect polluters instead of the people. As reported by NPR *Trump's EPA issues record low legal actions against polluters, watchdog group finds*¹

The dereliction of duty by the EPA is also noted by the Environmental Integrity Organization *Environmental Enforcement Plummet in the First Year of Trump's Second Term, Data Show Drop in Civil Lawsuits Against Polluters and Administrative Penalties*²

The intent of this bill is to let our Attorney General enforce laws that the Federal EPA will no longer prosecute. The bill will authorize the Attorney General to investigate, commence, and prosecute or defend any suit or action that holds certain entities accountable for tortious or otherwise unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change; authorizing the Attorney General to hire outside counsel to assist with an action under the Act if the Attorney General makes a certain determination; establishing the Climate Crimes Accountability Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; etc.

The fund can be used to remediate damages from the pollution and do for Maryland what our Federal Government no longer considers important, protecting the health of all the residents of Maryland.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0342

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2026/02/05/nx-s1-5699511/epa-trump-enforcement>

² <https://environmentalintegrity.org/news/environmental-enforcement-plummet-in-the-first-year-of-trumps-second-term/>

SB 342_Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home_FAV.

Uploaded by: Robert Simon

Position: FAV



Hearing before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
February 10, 2026

**Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on
SB 342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based upon, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation and respect for all life. MCCH is a grassroots voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics. In the 2025 Legislative Session, over 700 Maryland Catholics from 45 different Catholic parishes and religious communities across the State joined together through MCCH to support several key environmental bills under consideration by the General Assembly. MCCH is independent, though, and should be distinguished as an organization from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy positions of the bishops who lead these three dioceses.

MCCH would like to express its strong support for the passage of Senate Bill 342, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

We see it on our highways, byways, city streets, county roads, pastures, fields, and woods. We see it in our waterways, streams, and creeks. Litter—in the form of discarded aluminum cans, plastic, and glass bottles—is everywhere. It contaminates our soil, wastes needed resources, and eventually flows to our treasured Chesapeake Bay and then into our ocean. It is a threat to our human health and to wildlife. Plastic beverage containers break up into small pieces and are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Scientists estimate that humans are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of microplastics weekly. And then there is the intangible harm. The dumping of trash reinforces the philosophy that those who are able can engage in excessive consumerism and waste resources without any regard to the effect it has on others. Something must be done.

As Maryland Catholics, when advocating for the care of our common home, we are guided by the words of Pope Leo XIV and his predecessor, Pope Francis.

- In his 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*,¹ Pope Francis stated that "Political activity on the local level could also be directed to modifying consumption, developing an economy of waste disposal and recycling." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 180) Further, "Efforts to promote a sustainable use of natural resources are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits in the medium term." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 191). In this connection, he specifically mentions "intelligent and profitable ways of reusing, revamping, and recycling." (*Laudato Si'*, no. 192)

¹ The English text of the encyclical, to which the paragraph numbers in the following parentheses refer, can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

- In his 2023 apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum*², Pope Francis observed that “Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family and community habits are changing is ... helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society” (*Laudate Deum*, no. 71).
- Pope Leo XIV has continued the emphases placed on environmental stewardship by Pope Francis, calling on us to shift “from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and communal lifestyles.”³

Senate Bill 342 is responsive to these observations and recommendations. When enacted, it will respond to the current waste of resources resulting from the trashing of most of the 5.5 billion beverage containers annually sold in Maryland. The bill will also produce benefits for our economy, environment, and health, including:

- Capturing 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles, thereby increasing the rate of recycling in the state from 25 percent of containers to more than 90 percent.
- Increasing the availability of high-quality recycled feedstock, as the program under this bill is projected to generate annually an additional 13,328 tons of aluminum, 47,665 tons of PET plastic, 7,847 tons of HDPE plastic, and 159,397 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions—231,707 metric tons of CO₂-equivalent air emissions would be eliminated each year, as a result of not having to produce new cans and bottles from virgin materials. This is comparable to removing the emissions of over 50,000 cars.
- Benefitting taxpayers and local governments, as they currently pay for disposal of beverage containers in our landfills and incinerators. These costs will be reduced because beverage containers will be diverted from landfills and incinerators. Fees from beverage producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties will finance the costs of collection and processing of beverage containers by a nonprofit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization, not by local governments.
- Creating jobs through investments in new refillable and reusable beverage container systems. The recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times as many jobs as landfilling or incineration.⁴
- Improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and other local waterways, where beverage containers account for a substantial proportion of the volume of trash polluting these waterways—trash that degrades both the God-given beauty and ecosystem health of our streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Senate Bill 342 builds on the proven success of similar programs in other states and can lead to a positive cultural change. Currently 10 states covering 90 million people have successful recycling programs.⁵ When consumers receive cash for empty beverage containers, there is an incentive not to litter. This incentive over time can become part of the tapestry of our culture. As Pope Francis noted in the above quote from *Laudate Deum*, personal changes (such as recycling empty bottle containers) can lead to positive cultural changes and transformation.

At one time Maryland had a bottle refund program. Now is the time to bring back the bottle bill and begin to realize the environmental, health, economic, and cultural benefits it will bring.

For these reasons we strongly urge your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 342.

² The English text of this apostolic exhortation, to which the paragraph numbers in the parentheses refer, can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html.

³ “Address of The Holy Father Leo XIV to the Participants in the ‘Raising Hope’ Conference on the Tenth Anniversary of the Encyclical *Laudato Si’*,” 1 October 2025, available at <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/october/documents/20251001-conferenza-mariapoli.html>.

⁴ Maryland Sierra Club, “Maryland Needs a Bottle Bill! HB 331/SB 342” [Fact Sheet], 2026.

⁵ California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont. Redemption rates in 2021 ranged from 50 percent to 89 percent. There are currently 72 container deposit programs worldwide in 61 countries. Increased interest in the past decade has been fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. Susan Collins, “International Embrace,” *Plastics Recycling Update*, Winter 2020, pp. 38-43.

SB 342

Uploaded by: Sharon Boies

Position: FAV

February 10, 2026

SB342 – The Bottle Bill

Position – Favorable

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing to express our strong support for SB342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, commonly known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

Maryland currently faces a significant waste challenge. Of the billions of beverages sold in recyclable containers each year, only approximately 25% are recycled. (1) The remaining billions of containers frequently end up in landfills, incinerators, along our roads, or contaminating our vital waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

The environmental and public health implications of this waste are severe:

- Impact on Aquatic Life: Plastic debris causes fatal ingestion and entanglement for over 800 species. Approximately 100,000 marine mammals die annually due to plastic pollution, and 86% of sea turtles are negatively affected. (2)
- Ecosystem Disruption: Beyond physical harm, degrading plastics release toxic chemical additives and endocrine disruptors. These pollutants can even inhibit oxygen-producing bacteria, threatening the fundamental balance of our ecosystem. (3)
- Persistence: These materials do not biodegrade; they remain in our environment for hundreds of years, continuously breaking down into increasingly dangerous fragments. (4)
- Microplastics: Plastic bottles break down into secondary microplastics through exposure to radiation and wave action. These particles have been detected in both tap and bottled drinking water, posing a direct threat to human health. (5)

While the Clean Water Act aims to make our waters "fishable and swimmable," it does not specifically regulate plastic beverage containers. This leaves the burden of cleanup to programs such as Mr. Trash Wheel, local municipalities, and volunteers. SB342 offers a common-sense, proactive solution by creating a deposit program. Similar programs in states like California and Oregon have proven successful in significantly increasing recycling rates and reducing litter. (6)

Passing SB342 will reduce landfill waste, protect our aquatic species, and ensure that containers are repurposed rather than left to pollute our environment. I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Sharon Boies
Protect Our Streams

RESOURCES-

(1) Jan 9, 2026 — **Mr. Trash Wheel has removed more than 2.6 million beverage containers** from Baltimore Harbor. But across Maryland, only one quarter of beverage containers are recycled. <https://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/redeem-cans-and-bottles-for-cash-at-mr-trash-wheels-event-raising-support-for-maryland-bottle-bill/>

(5) Dec 18, 2025 — **Microplastics have been detected in drinking water**, including both tap and bottled sources. A 2017 study that tested 159 samples from 14 ...[Read more https://earth.org/microplastics-in-water/](https://earth.org/microplastics-in-water/)

(4) Microplastics as a Threat to Aquatic Ecosystems and Human Health

The threat stemming from the occurrence of microplastics has become a global problem because of their ubiquitous bioavailability in the environment and the effects they have not only on aquatic organisms but also on humans. Further, microplastics can also bioaccumulate contaminants that lead to serious damage to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11359092/>

(2) Plastic Pollution Affects Sea Life Throughout the Ocean

Photos document extent of the impact, which extends to the seafood people eat. Fish, seabirds, sea turtles, and marine mammals can become entangled in or ingest plastic debris, causing suffocation, starvation, and drowning. Humans are not immune to this threat

<https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/09/24/plastic-pollution-affects-sea-life-throughout-the-ocean>

(3) Long-Term Environmental Consequences

Plastic bottles do not biodegrade, meaning they remain in the ecosystem for hundreds of years, notes the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#). Beyond direct injury, these plastics affect the ecosystem at a microscopic level. For example, toxic chemicals from degrading plastic can inhibit the oxygen production of *Prochlorococcus*, a type of bacteria responsible for generating significant amounts of the Earth's oxygen, according to The Ocean Cleanup.

(6) AI Overview - **These programs, most notably in California and Oregon, have proven highly effective. California boasts a 68% recycling rate, while Oregon achieves approximately 90%.** By providing a financial incentive of 5 to 10 cents per container, these systems significantly reduce litter and greenhouse gas emissions—cutting over 300,000 tons of emissions annually in California alone.

Testimony for Maryland State Senate Education, Ene

Uploaded by: Susan Buyer

Position: FAV



Indivisible Worcester Maryland

<http://indivisibleworcestermd.org>
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admin@indivisibleworcestermd.org

Susan Buyer and Toby Perkins
Coordinators

Testimony for Maryland State Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee on SB 342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill

Indivisible Worcester MD strongly supports SB 342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

The objective of this program is to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution. It would add a small refundable deposit to the purchase of beverage containers. The deposit is fully refunded when the empty containers are returned to a convenient retailer or other redemption point. The program would be financed and implemented by beverage producers through a nonprofit Stewardship Organization, not by Maryland residents. The Maryland Department of the Environment will provide strong oversight.

Programs like this have been operating in 10 U.S. states for decades and are the most effective policy for reducing beverage container litter. With a 10-cent deposit on most containers, it would capture 90% of beverage containers sold in the state annually, diverting an additional 3.6 billion beverage containers annually from landfills, incinerators, and the environment, reducing pollution from littered plastic bottles that break down in the environment and get washed into the Chesapeake Bay. Recent polling has found that more than 90% of Maryland's voting public would support the Bottle Bill.

We urge you to support SB 342, to reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution, provide cleaner parks and waterways, and create savings for municipalities and local taxpayers.

Susan P. Buyer and Toby J. Perkins
Coordinators, Indivisible Worcester MD
11621 Twin Oaks Drive, Berlin MD 21811
admin@indivisibleworcestermd.org
<https://indivisibleworcestermd.org/>
facebook @IndivisibleWorcesterMD

CRI Supports MD SB 342 2-10-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Susan Collins

Position: FAV

February 6, 2026

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in support of Senate Bill 342, “Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program,” a bill that would establish a beverage container deposit program in Maryland.

We applaud the bill for:

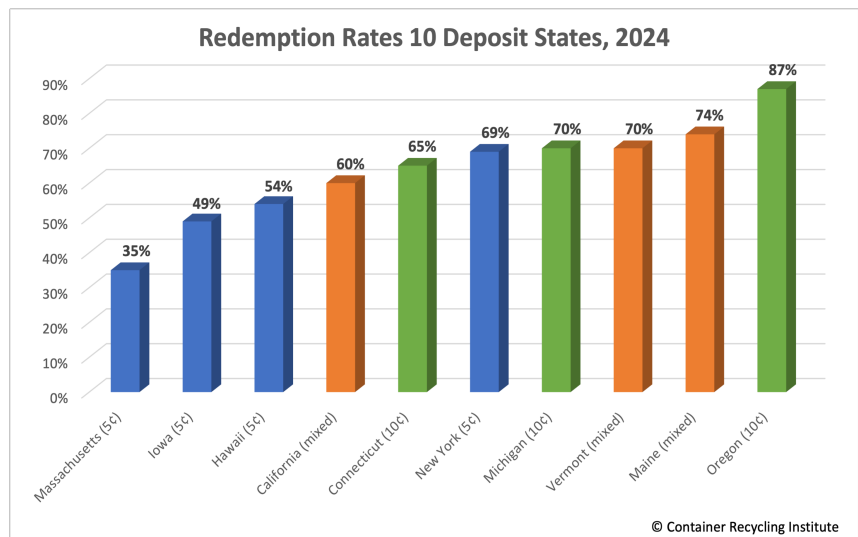
1. Incorporating most beverage types into the proposed deposit-return system (DRS), including **wine and liquor**. Doing so will generate clean, high-quality glass that is desired by glass manufacturers, and will help alleviate the pressure that the state has been experiencing to find aggregate uses for glass collected through municipal programs.
2. Including a **wide scope of beverage containers**, as per the definition.
3. Specifying a **deposit of 10¢ for containers** with options to increase the refund value in the future. Our preference would be for the rate to be 10¢ for all sizes of containers.

Ten cents is a strong financial incentive for people to return containers rather than throw them in the trash or litter them.

Michigan and Oregon, two of the three U.S. states with dime deposits, have achieved much higher redemption rates—70% and 87% respectively in 2024—than the deposit states with 5¢ deposits (where reported redemption rates range from 35% to 724%). When consumers who purchased the

drinks do not take bottles and cans in for refunds themselves, there are always other people and

groups ready to do the redemption for them to generate income.



DRS Laws Have Many Benefits

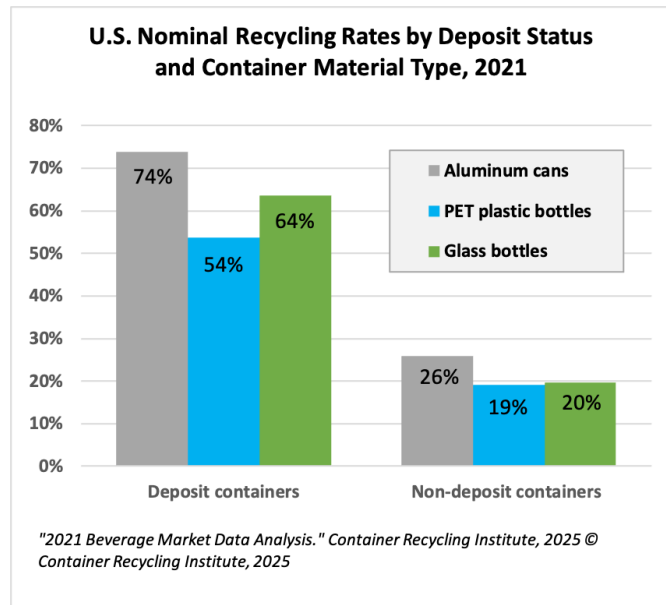
For more than 50 years, beverage container deposit refund laws have been successful in achieving recycling rates that are up to 3 times higher than those of bottles and cans without deposits. As the graphic below shows, about three quarters (74%) of aluminum cans with a deposit were recycled nationwide in 2021, in contrast to just 26% of cans lacking a deposit. The differences for bottles are more pronounced: 54% vs. 19% for non-deposit PET plastic, and 64% vs. 20% for non-deposit glass.

Increasing beverage sales nationwide has led to burgeoning bottle and can waste. **Based on national statistics, CRI estimates that 79% of the 5.5 billion beverage bottles and cans sold in Maryland in 2021 were wasted:** littered, landfilled, or incinerated. That level of consumption and wasting represents a significant burden on taxpayers: whether through city-run recycling programs or municipally-contracted trash pick-up and disposal.

DRS laws have multiple benefits, including:

- **Achieving higher recycling rates** than municipal programs alone.
- **Transferring** the financial and operational responsibility for recycling from taxpayers and ratepayers to the producers of disposable beverage containers.
- **Adding value to local and regional economies** through the sale and processing of scrap materials.
- **Avoiding greenhouse gas emissions and reducing energy use** by displacing virgin materials in manufacturing.
- **Reducing litter** that is expensive for public and private entities to clean up, that causes injuries to people and domestic animals, and that adds to harmful ocean plastic waste.
- **Promoting job growth;** it is estimated that there are more than 20,000 jobs resulting from the existing deposit return systems in the 10 states where the law exists.

Beverage container deposit programs are extremely popular – a public opinion poll from 2025 by Gonzales Research and Media Services found that **90%** of Maryland voters would support a deposit return system in the state.



If Maryland were to pass this DRS bill, CRI estimates that the state would recycle **3.7 billion additional containers annually—or just over 231,000 tons of metal, glass, plastic and paper—**over and above the recycling currently taking place. By reducing the need to make new bottles and cans from virgin materials, this additional recycling would eliminate about 259,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions: **an amount equivalent to taking almost 56,000 cars off the road for a year.**

Beverage Brands Are Committed to Increasing Use of Recycled Materials

We are optimistic that there will be strong markets for deposit containers generated in Maryland, in part because multiple global beverage brands have made public announcements about increasing their use of recycled materials, as the below table shows.

Selected plastics reduction commitments by global brands		
Company	Timeframe	Commitment or target
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Equivalent of 100% of containers collected and recycled
Coca-Cola	by 2030	Average 50% recycled content in bottles
Danone	by 2025	100% of packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable
McDonald's	by 2025	100% of guest packaging from renewable, recycled or certified sources
Kraft Heinz	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable, reusable or compostable
Nestlé	by 2025	100% of packaging recyclable or reusable

Reprinted from CRI's Winter 2018 newsletter

© Container Recycling Institute, 2018

These lofty goals can only be met through the increased availability of high-quality beverage bottles and cans for use as feedstock in new containers. Deposit programs consistently generate such high-quality bottles and cans. Note that some of these goals have been reduced by the beverage companies in the last 2-3 years.

No Evidence Found that DRS Laws Cause Declines in Beverage Sales

CRI would also like to take this opportunity to refute the claim that adding a deposit amount onto beverage containers would result in decreasing beverage container sales. **This is not true – CRI found in a 2023 Report that there is no definitive evidence suggesting that the introduction or expansion of a deposit system has caused a decline in beverage sales.**

DRS Laws Are Becoming More Popular Worldwide

Deposits on beverage containers are now available to more than 692 million people worldwide. With the announcement of multiple new deposit laws in 2024 and 2025 (including Poland, Singapore, England, Northern Ireland, and Spain), it is expected that more than **900 million people will have access to deposit programs by 2027.** This trend is projected to continue as more nations realize that deposits are a vital part of the solution to the problem of bottle and can waste and plastic pollution.

***About the Container Recycling Institute:** CRI is a nonprofit organization and a leading authority on the economic and environmental impacts of beverage containers and other consumer-product packaging.*

In sum, CRI supports the passage of a beverage container deposit law in Maryland. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Susan Collins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Collins".

Susan Collins
President, Container Recycling Institute

ACT Testimony - SB0342.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor Swanson

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB342 –
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Energy, Education, and the Environment Committee
February 6, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB342** on behalf of Assateague Coastal Trust.

Assateague Coastal Trust is dedicated to its mission of conservation, preservation, and protection of the waterways of Worcester County and Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore. Our work helps ensure that residents and visitors to Maryland's coast forever enjoy the resources provided by our coastal waters.

The Coastal Bays are fragile ecosystems that support fisheries, tourism, and local economies. Cleaner waterways mean healthier habitats and stronger coastal resilience. Ocean City, in particular, would benefit from reduced beach and street litter, lower municipal cleanup costs, and a cleaner environment for residents and visitors alike.

On the Lower Eastern Shore, beverage containers are easily carried into the Coastal Bays, where they harm wildlife, degrade water quality, and break down into microplastics. **SB342's refundable deposit system would significantly reduce this pollution by increasing recycling and reuse rates.**

Assateague Coastal Trust hosts litter clean-up events throughout the year, engaging people across the Lower Eastern Shore. Consistently, bottles and cans are the most abundant items collected at these events by volume.

By shifting waste management responsibility to beverage producers and encouraging public participation, SB342 protects taxpayers while delivering real environmental benefits.

Assateague Coastal Trust urges an **FAVORABLE REPORT** on **SB342**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Taylor Swanson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Taylor Swanson,
Executive Director and Assateague COASTKEEPER
Assateague Coastal Trust

2026-2-6 ARK Testimony on MD SB342 Maryland Bevera

Uploaded by: Trey Sherard

Position: FAV



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February 6th, 2026

Anacostia Riverkeeper Supports the Maryland Bottle Bill, formally SB342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

The Anacostia River is frequently referred to as DC's river, but five-sixths of the watershed is in Maryland, including significant portions of Montgomery and Prince George's County and a significant portion of the state's residents. Litter is often invisible because it is either out of sight in a storm drain or in a creek where not many people pass by it, but it has also become so ubiquitous in Maryland that many residents walk by significant litter every day and have ceased to note the litter as they do so. Unfortunately it is still visible and it is still a blight on many Maryland communities. It also blights many of Maryland's waterways where it presents a lethal risk to wildlife and a constant detriment to the enjoyment of Marylanders recreating outdoors. Litter is also a constant burden on the economies of local municipalities across Maryland as choices made by private companies become unfunded mandates to pick up their long-lasting trash. Of all the types of litter that we remove and record via trash traps and volunteer cleanups in Maryland, beverage containers are the single largest category across different types of cleanup. For instance, a series of small community-led cleanups this past year across Montgomery County resulted in this breakout of litter by percentage weight: 19% plastic bottles, 11% aluminum cans, 34% glass bottles; beverage containers alone were nearly two-thirds of all litter captured in that project. This may seem overwhelming, but it's also a political and environmental opportunity. This one law in Maryland could cut litter by half even if without reaching 100% compliance and every step closer to full compliance could yield many tons more trash prevented from ever polluting our neighborhoods, parks, streams, and rivers. **Please support and pass the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act.** We are happy to answer any questions you may have about the quoted project or any other context we can share from our decades of work in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, please reach out to me: trey@anacostiariverkeeper.org.

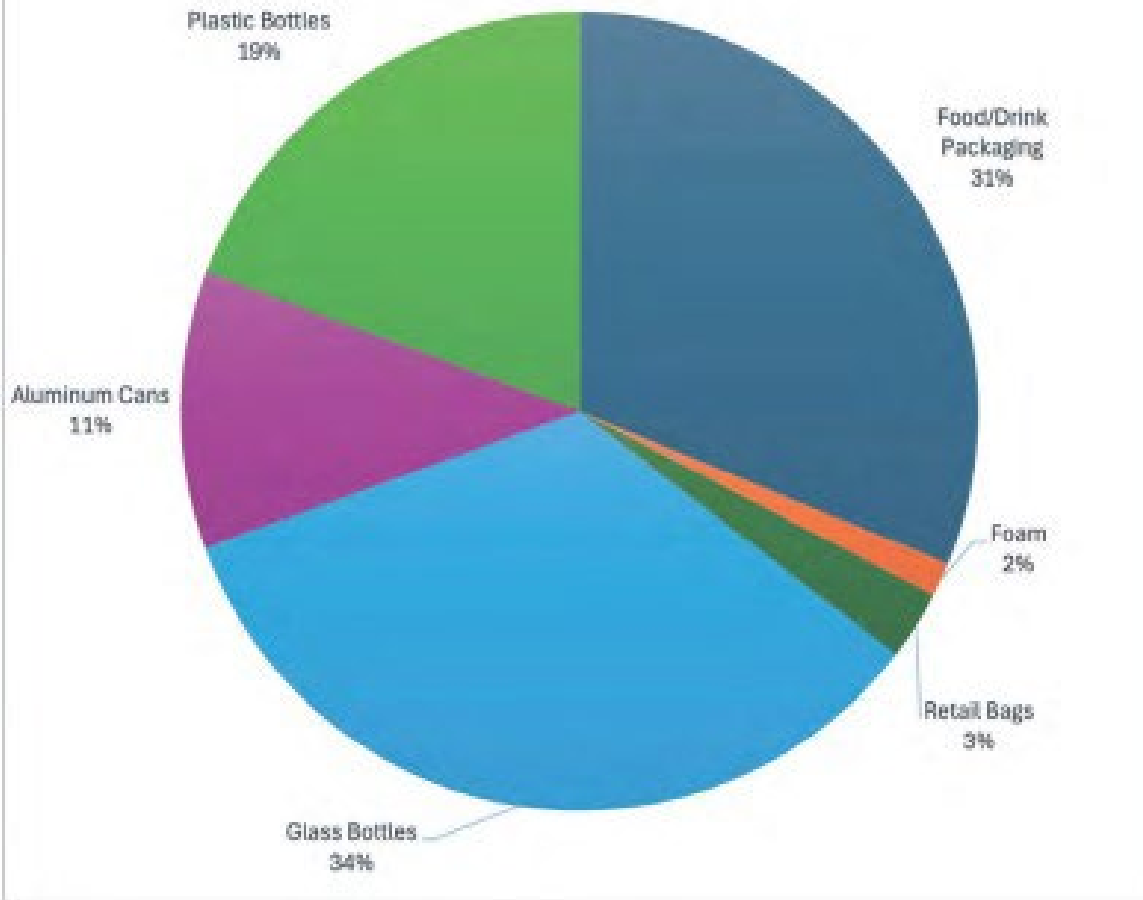
Sincerely,

Trey Sherard
Anacostia Riverkeeper

PS. Please see the graph of litter by type on the second page.



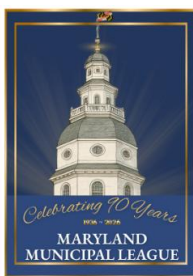
Litter Breakdown by Weight



SB342-MML-Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Tyler Brice

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

DATE: February 4, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

BILL: SB 342

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) is pleased to offer its strong support for Senate Bill 342, the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. SB342 establishes a comprehensive and innovative framework aimed at significantly increasing recycling rates for beverage containers while meaningfully reducing litter in communities throughout our state. By introducing a container deposit and refund system, the legislation provides a proven and effective mechanism for encouraging Marylanders to return and recycle beverage containers, thus ensuring these materials are diverted from landfills and roadways and are instead reintegrated into the recycling stream.

This bill represents a meaningful commitment to public cleanliness, environmental sustainability, and the reduction of costs associated with litter management, a central concern for local governments. MML appreciates that the legislation recognizes the important role of municipalities by enabling local governments to participate in the establishment and operation of redemption centers, and by ensuring that funds and performance goals are aligned toward community benefit. These features will help support municipal efforts to keep Maryland's neighborhoods cleaner and safer for residents and visitors alike.

MML applauds the intent and design of SB342, seeing it as a vital tool for advancing the State's environmental goals. The bill promises to provide substantial benefits by reducing municipal litter clean-up costs, supporting recycling education, and fostering partnerships among state, local, and private stakeholders. Importantly, the program is poised to deliver measurable improvements that directly impact the quality of life in the communities our members serve. The Maryland Municipal League thanks the committee for its consideration of this important measure and urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 342. We look forward to partnering with the State and other stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation and to maximize its positive impact for all Marylanders.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Tyler Brice: Manager, Advocacy and Public Policy, tylerb@mdmunicipal.org

MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.

SB0342 Bottle Bill Favorable Written 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Walter Tucker

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction
Program

FAVORABLE

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Rev. Chip Tucker, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

DATE: February 10, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 0342. The Episcopal Church along with many other faith communities endorses responsible stewardship of God's creation. Our faith teaches us that all creation is interconnected, and the health of our environment directly impacts the well-being of our communities. Our standard of living has led to a degradation of our sacred earth, and we have a moral responsibility to work for restoration of the environment.

About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland each year. Of those, only 1.5 billion containers are captured for recycling – even with Maryland's curbside pickup of recyclables. Of the 4 billion remaining containers, 2.6 billion are plastic, and end up in landfills, in our waterways and as litter. Plastic pollution is a major problem worldwide. Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used containers and keeping them out of our environment. 10 U.S. states have successful beverage container deposit programs.

All creation is a gift from God that we need to nurture. This bill promotes environmental stewardship and care for our environment, our local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. It aligns with our faith's teachings on the importance of caring for God's creation and ensuring that future generations can enjoy a healthy and sustainable environment.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) requests a (UN)/FAVORABLE report

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is a ministry of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA

2025 Expanded Daily Trash Pickup PDF.pdf

Uploaded by: William Walmsley Jr.

Position: FAV

Date	January						February			
	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans
1	7.1	4.52	6	5	8	2.58	12.08	7.26	48	12
2	4.61	2.56	20	5	2	2.05	6.17	3.5	10	3
3	7.34	5.6	15	4	5	1.74	4.34	2.69	8	2
4	3.02	1.7	1	1	0	1.32	3.59	2.2	7	4
5	5.31	3.33	13	4	3	1.98	2.54	0.89	4	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.95	2.56	24	4
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.76	1.74	26	5
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.67	4.47	17	9
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.84	2.11	6	7
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.14	3.02	0	1
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.34	1.72	32	7
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	8.24	4.01	42	3	1	4.23	1.08	0.68	11	3
14	2.38	1.28	13	4	1	1.1	2.12	1.19	18	6
15	2.29	1.17	11	6	0	1.12	7.56	5.11	7	7
16	5.6	1.62	5	5	3	3.98	2.31	0.81	15	4
17	1.81	1.44	2	5	2	0.37	5.23	3.31	5	3
18	5.71	3.17	21	6	2	2.54	2.51	1.72	12	0
19	3.31	1.04	8	1	1	2.27	1.9	1.22	12	3
20	1.43	1.12	4	1	1	0.31	5.78	4.39	6	1
21	2.29	1.85	0	0	0	0.44	2.78	0.82	5	7
22	0.37	0.11	6	2	2	0.26	2.65	1.26	11	4
23	2.18	1.56	4	0	0	0.62	0.82	0.45	4	4
24	0.6	0.34	3	2	1	0.26	3.92	2.69	0	0
25	4.34	2.88	15	10	4	1.46	1.34	0.79	0	0
26	1.59	0.84	4	1	1	0.75	7.97	6.29	11	0
27	1.12	0.68	4	1	1	0.44	7.1	3	4	5
28	1.1	0.37	5	3	0	0.73	2.87	2.41	1	1
29	3.75	2.07	30	5	0	1.68				
30	4.3	1.63	13	3	0	2.67				
31	10.94	7.6	21	19	8	3.34				
Total	90.73	52.49	266	96	46	38.24	115.36	68.3	304	103
Daily Avg.	2.93	1.69	8.58	3.10	1.48	1.23	4.12	2.44	10.86	3.68
Current YTD	90.73	52.49	266	96	46	38.24	206.09	120.79	570	199
Last Year YTD Total	72.73					32.33	144.14			
Minatures					14					

		March						April			
Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans
3	4.82	7.47	5.57	11	9	7	1.9	4.59	1.26	25	5
2	2.67	3.3	2.59	10	9	3	0.71	2.14	1.59	5	7
3	1.65	2.54	2.12	0	1	2	0.42	12.83	9.45	35	16
3	1.39	0.9	0.24	2	2	0	0.66	5.12	3.86	9	4
0	1.65	4.65	2.67	6	1	2	1.98	0.84	0.53	5	4
0	1.39	7.3	2.58	28	10	2	4.72	3.35	2.18	13	4
0	3.02	4.74	2.27	20	1	1	2.47	2.76	1.97	15	6
6	3.2	4.34	3	14	6	3	1.34	2.07	1.25	5	1
3	0.73	4.21	1.85	16	5	1	2.36	5.12	2.43	18	15
6	1.12	3.09	2.79	8	2	4	0.3	2.91	1.96	16	2
0	3.62	5.69	4.28	14	5	4	1.41	2.29	1.3	5	1
0	0	4.54	2.11	20	4	1	2.43	12.83	7.31	46	3
0	0.4	3.86	1.39	11	9	7	2.47	5.6	2.8	19	7
7	0.93	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.38	1.59	3	2
1	2.45	9.17	6.41	14	6	10	2.76	2.49	1.28	8	3
1	1.5	3.81	2.7	3	0	6	1.11	5.75	3.21	34	5
1	1.92	4.26	1.81	24	7	1	2.45	2.16	1.01	7	3
11	0.79	3.46	1.65	25	4	0	1.81	7.39	6.11	3	1
8	0.68	2.07	1.32	11	4	0	0.75	3.2	1.81	14	11
0	1.39	3.4	1.2	21	4	0	2.2	0.82	0.38	2	3
1	1.96	5.04	3.3	53	3	0	1.74	1.54	0.39	7	2
3	1.39	5.84	3.83	212	14	4	2.01	2.13	1.93	12	0
1	0.37	2.01	1.28	8	2	1	0.73	0.88	0.46	4	2
0	1.23	4.1	2.2	7	1	2	1.9	4.01	3.5	4	0
0	0.55	4.94	3.66	5	1	7	1.28	4.28	3.79	4	1
1	1.68	1.79	0.89	6	1	1	0.9	0	0	0	0
4	4.1	1.94	0.17	9	2	0	1.77	6.35	3.92	25	11
3	0.46	4.7	3.58	10	4	2	1.12	1.32	0.79	14	2
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0.55	0.24	3	2
		6.04	3.92	14	14	5	2.12	4.26	2.12	12	8
		3.66	2.23	8	9	2	1.43				
68	47.06	122.86	73.61	590	140	78	49.25	111.96	70.42	372	131
2.43	1.68	3.96	2.37	19.03	4.52	2.52	1.59	3.73	2.35	12.40	4.37
114	85.3	328.95	194.40	1160	339	192	134.55	440.91	264.82	1532	470
	62.91	254.64					108.78	337.89	55.46	33.00	14.00
36							43				

2025 Daily Bottle

		May						June			
Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans
0	3.33	0.51	0.33	4	1	0	0.18	1.08	0.59	3	2
1	0.55	2.65	2.03	8	3	2	0.62	1.7	0.8	14	1
0	3.38	0.49	0.16	0	1	0	0.33	2.82	2.05	8	6
3	1.26	5.53	4.41	4	17	5	1.12	3.81	3.15	11	3
0	0.31	1.57	1.13	5	1	1	0.44	2.18	1.54	1	3
3	1.17	4.87	2.11	19	8	0	2.76	1.79	0.58	5	6
1	0.79	1.1	0.57	3	1	0	0.53	5	3.57	2	2
1	0.82	0.9	0.55	7	1	1	0.35	2.87	2.14	1	0
2	2.69	2.95	1.27	6	2	0	1.68	0.73	0.22	0	0
1	0.95	1.79	0.89	9	7	0	0.9	0	0	0	0
1	0.99	1.59	1.35	8	3	1	0.24	0	0	0	0
6	5.52	1.06	0.75	3	0	0	0.31	0	0	0	0
2	2.8	1.08	0.77	5	0	1	0.31	0	0	0	0
1	0.79	0.88	0.39	3	0	0	0.49	0	0	0	0
0	1.21	0.75	0.2	4	1	0	0.55	0	0	0	0
2	2.54	1.12	0.59	3	0	0	0.53	0	0	0	0
0	1.15	3.46	1.78	23	6	1	1.68	0	0	0	0
12	1.28	4.08	2.58	14	8	1	1.5	8.22	5.4	12	5
0	1.39	0.64	0.33	4	1	0	0.31	1.83	1.3	13	1
0	0.44	2.69	2.2	21	2	2	0.49	4.17	3.63	7	6
0	1.15	0.75	0.23	4	2	0	0.52	3.95	3.55	58	12
2	0.2	2.75	0.71	6	3	0	2.04	5.83	3.47	8	2
0	0.42	4.88	2.87	5	5	0	2.01	1.7	1.04	4	3
6	0.51	7.05	3.63	23	5	0	3.42	0.66	0.37	0	0
3	0.49	3.35	2.8	9	0	5	0.55	1.46	0.53	0	0
0	0	5.49	1.98	6	2	4	3.51	0.97	0.6	4	2
5	2.43	1.15	0.36	4	1	0	0.79	1.21	0.57	3	3
0	0.53	0.44	0.11	0	0	0	0.33	3.92	1.87	12	14
0	0.31	2.54	1.9	3	2	1	0.64	7.78	6.5	17	7
0	2.14	1.06	0.29	2	1	1	0.77	4.14	3.72	2	4
		7.92	5.72	20	12	7	2.2				
52	41.54	77.09	44.99	235	96	33	32.1	67.82	47.19	185	82
1.73	1.38	2.49	1.45	7.58	3.10	1.06	1.04	2.26	1.57	6.17	2.73
244	176.09	518.00	309.81	1767	566	277	208.19	585.82	357.00	1952	648
3.00	136.57	406.69	97.54	326.00	91.00	25.00	163.29	464.07	133.79	574.00	169.00
41						30					

Pickup (lbs./count)

		July						August			
Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans
0	0.49	1.46	1.33	5	2	1	0.13	4.34	2.71	7	2
0	0.9	3.35	1.71	8	6	0	1.64	1.04	0.53	5	2
6	0.77	1.28	0.64	4	3	0	0.64	4.94	3.66	8	8
1	0.66	0.93	0.47	4	2	0	0.46	0.64	0.31	3	1
0	0.64	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.63	1.37	6	6
4	1.21	3.86	2.89	10	8	3	0.97	4.78	3.32	11	4
4	1.43	4.98	3.9	10	6	5	1.08	0.79	0.3	8	2
0	0.73	0.66	0.33	8	3	0	0.33	2.47	1.72	6	4
0	0.51	7.25	5.97	15	5	6	1.28	7.69	7.23	4	0
0	0	9.81	6.57	51	15	6	3.24	4.87	3.81	15	8
0	0	4.87	3.77	31	4	1	1.1	4.03	3.13	17	8
0	0	0.71	0.29	2	1	0	0.42	3.9	3.57	6	2
0	0	3.9	2.62	4	10	2	1.28	3.02	2.31	13	1
0	0	1.61	1.39	8	4	1	0.22	2.47	1.96	2	2
0	0	0.68	0.35	4	0	0	0.33	1.52	1.12	8	0
0	0	2.4	1.8	3	5	2	0.6	5.58	4.32	15	9
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.53	2.39	24	6
8	2.82	5.88	4.51	17	5	0	1.37	1.96	1.54	3	15
1	0.53	6	4.54	15	7	6	1.46	3.31	2.67	5	1
2	0.54	6.88	3.82	29	6	5	3.06	8.47	6.04	18	10
3	0.4	4.65	3.66	22	2	2	0.99	10.18	6.21	4	1
1	2.36	4.67	2.91	7	11	0	1.76	1.17	0.88	4	2
0	0.66	3.06	1.94	6	0	0	1.12	3.24	2.6	13	15
0	0.29	1.08	0.82	0	0	0	0.26	9.37	8.14	14	9
0	0.93	6.28	5.75	3	4	10	0.53	5.86	5.04	3	3
0	0.37	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.09	1.41	6	4
0	0.64	6.97	5.4	12	8	8	1.57	3.17	2.84	7	2
8	2.05	6.22	5.23	14	2	6	0.99	2.62	2.31	4	1
3	1.28	0.57	0.35	6	2	0	0.22	0.79	0.44	8	4
4	0.42	2.27	1.08	4	4	0	1.19	0.88	0.66	7	0
		0.88	0.42	3	1	0	0.46	11.37	9.87	19	3
45	20.63	103.16	74.46	305	126	64	28.7	124.72	94.41	273	135
1.50	0.69	3.33	2.40	9.84	4.06	2.06	0.93	4.02	3.05	8.81	4.35
322	228.82	688.98	431.46	2257	774	386	257.52	813.70	525.87	2530.00	909.00
54.00	184.42	533.56	182.90	874.00	260.00	99.00	204.8	645.62	259.51	1221.00	369.00
35						54					

		September						October		
Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles
5	1.63	0.71	0.56	2	0	1	0.15	0	0	0
0	0.51	1.92	1.57	8	2	2	0.35	0	0	0
5	1.28	0.46	0.13	0	0	0	0.33	0	0	0
0	0.33	1.72	0.62	5	1	0	1.1	0	0	0
1	0.26	3.2	1.94	5	1	2	1.26	0	0	0
5	1.46	3.75	3.38	2	3	1	0.37	0	0	0
0	0.49	9.39	4.83	31	9	1	4.56	6.28	4.89	13
4	0.75	1.74	1.37	0	3	2	0.37	7.39	4.7	12
4	0.46	4.81	4.19	4	3	7	0.62	1.12	0.26	4
3	1.06	8.2	6.17	17	5	10	2.03	1.81	1.61	2
4	0.9	5.12	4.04	9	9	1	1.08	5.09	3.06	12
7	0.33	0.24	0.09	1	0	0	0.15	6.26	4.89	11
1	0.71	6.13	4.52	15	10	5	1.61	6.77	6.1	7
0	0.51	3.99	3.02	10	3	2	0.97	6.09	5.34	7
0	0.4	0.79	0.58	7	1	1	0.21	2.73	2.2	7
5	1.26	0.99	0.33	3	0	0	0.66	2.03	1.79	8
1	4.14	4.65	2.71	9	4	3	1.94	0.62	0.36	6
1	0.42	6.99	3.02	30	8	1	3.97	1.1	0.48	3
11	0.64	1.06	0.84	10	2	0	0.22	12.79	11.71	14
5	2.43	9	8.03	5	5	2	0.97	1.83	1.05	7
0	3.97	8.09	6.86	9	5	3	1.23	2.27	1.37	4
5	0.29	4.1	3.15	3	6	2	0.95	1.52	0.9	4
20	0.64	0.75	0.26	1	1	2	0.49	2.89	2.29	11
8	1.23	2.11	1.03	9	5	2	1.08	9.01	8.81	2
0	0.82	0.49	0.28	7	3	0	0.21	2.76	1.86	6
2	0.68	2.84	1.21	17	4	0	1.63	1.99	0.98	5
2	0.33	12.35	8.82	15	31	7	3.53	5.2	4.94	7
0	0.31	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.54	1.99	7
4	0.35	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.3	1.12	1
0	0.22	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.18	0.42	1
24	1.5							3.59	1.85	32
127	30.31	105.59	73.55	234	124	57	32.04	97.16	74.97	193
4.10	0.98	3.52	2.45	7.80	4.13	1.90	1.07	3.13	2.42	6.23
513.00	287.83	919.29	599.42	2764.00	1033.00	570.00	319.87	1016.45	674.39	2957.00
155.00	240.25	740.68	315.50	1457.00	431.00	200.00	279.32	788.35	347.87	1609.00
52						51				

October			November						
Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total
0	0	0	2.51	2.07	5	0	2	0.44	2.34
0	0	0	4.34	3.57	11	9	3	0.77	3.31
0	0	0	1.59	0.66	8	7	0	0.93	3.92
0	0	0	1.32	1.01	6	2	1	0.31	2.4
0	0	0	1.1	0.59	4	1	0	0.51	0.49
0	0	0	1.94	0.99	5	1	1	0.95	0
5	5	1.39	1.94	0.99	3	2	1	0.95	8.8
11	5	2.69	1.86	1.25	18	2	0	0.61	5.05
7	0	0.86	5.95	4.41	16	10	1	1.54	3.84
2	0	0.2	3.24	2.93	8	7	2	0.31	1.46
11	3	2.03	1.72	1.17	19	4	1	0.55	0.51
7	7	1.37	3.97	2.82	5	7	3	1.15	2.98
7	10	0.67	0.57	0.22	2	1	0	0.35	0
4	8	0.75	1.74	1.23	9	1	0	0.51	0.77
4	2	0.53	4.74	4.37	4	5	7	0.37	2.95
4	2	0.24	5.09	3.9	23	8	3	1.19	0.57
4	2	0.26	3.35	2.64	7	3	2	0.71	2.31
6	0	0.62	2.4	0.59	13	3	0	1.81	1.98
9	17	1.08	3.29	1.68	6	5	0	1.61	0
2	1	0.78	4.01	3.35	21	7	2	0.66	5.31
2	2	0.9	3.55	2.41	16	10	2	1.14	6.9
4	1	0.62	1.76	0.94	6	1	0	0.82	2.29
6	2	0.6	3.51	1.94	18	10	1	1.57	1.5
0	1	0.2	1.34	0.99	10	1	2	0.35	1.48
5	1	0.9	3.84	3.07	12	6	2	0.77	2.49
7	0	1.01	7.12	5.25	22	4	4	1.87	2.14
5	8	0.26	4.14	2.82	10	7	3	1.32	1.15
2	3	0.55	2.49	1.94	1	4	2	0.55	5.75
2	1	0.18	4.08	2.56	15	9	0	1.52	2.76
2	0	1.76	3.55	2.16	9	4	1	1.39	3.66
6	0	1.74							2.78
124	81	22.19	92.05	64.52	312	141	46	27.53	81.89
4.00	2.61	0.72	3.07	2.15	10.40	4.70	1.53	0.92	2.64
1157.00	651.00	342.06	1108.50	738.91	3269.00	1298.00	697.00	369.59	1190.39
494.00	226.00	294.62	857.50	390.96	1836.00	607.00	256.00	320.68	959.84
34			34						

December					Year Total				
Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass	Film +	Total	Recycle Weight	Plastic Bottles	Metal Cans	Glass
2.05	0	1	1	0.29	44.19	28.25	116	39	28
2.36	6	13	3	0.95	34.53	22.81	105	60	18
2.35	10	5	0	1.57	42.55	29.51	96	53	21
0.77	3	1	0	1.63	28.98	18.74	55	38	13
0.38	4	1	0	0.11	23.51	14.37	53	23	9
0	0	0	0	0	35.59	20.59	117	48	19
4.79	26	12	4	4.01	50.54	29.82	157	51	22
3.62	9	5	6	1.43	37.02	24.4	97	45	28
2.05	17	3	1	1.79	46.51	31.99	106	57	25
0.84	10	1	0	0.62	41.32	30.59	136	50	32
0.25	3	0	0	0.26	36.25	24.07	150	52	16
1.46	11	3	2	1.52	36.49	23.29	105	27	26
0	0	0	0	0	40.25	25.42	129	51	29
0.57	2	2	1	0.2	24.43	17.96	75	28	21
2.71	6	2	0	0.24	35.67	25.5	80	35	21
0.15	0	0	0	0.42	35.25	21.22	112	40	24
0.97	5	2	0	1.34	34.38	18.42	112	43	13
1.04	2	2	0	0.94	51.68	31.81	155	63	36
0	0	0	0	0	39.4	28.46	112	45	44
3.17	9	6	5	2.14	53.79	38.38	150	53	25
4.43	14	12	5	2.47	51.99	35.08	196	58	18
1.63	8	3	4	0.66	35.08	21.72	287	52	24
0.68	6	1	1	0.82	27.42	17.37	84	49	28
0.77	3	1	1	0.71	44.73	33.29	75	24	23
0.79	6	2	1	1.7	41.43	31.24	70	35	33
1.21	5	7	1	0.93	33.99	20.66	86	32	14
0.29	6	1	0	0.86	51.85	33.81	106	77	38
4.21	13	9	5	1.54	33.97	24.81	81	42	29
1.75	9	3	1	1.01	24.12	16.93	92	36	10
2.34	15	6	0	1.32	32.34	18.34	79	46	11
1.77	9	1	1	1.01	41.14	29.46	112	51	42
49.4	217	105	43	32.49	1190.39	788.31	3486	1403	740
1.59	7.00	3.39	1.39	1.05	4.48	2.33	8.46	3.61	3.05
788.31	3486.00	1403.00	740.00	402.08					
460.15	2089	713	322	353.83					
24									448

Film +	Date
15.94	1
11.72	2
13.04	3
10.24	4
9.14	5
15	6
20.72	7
12.62	8
14.52	9
10.73	10
12.18	11
13.2	12
14.83	13
6.47	14
10.17	15
14.03	16
15.96	17
19.87	18
10.94	19
15.41	20
16.91	21
13.36	22
10.05	23
11.44	24
10.19	25
13.33	26
18.04	27
9.16	28
7.19	29
14	30
11.68	31
402.08	
1.44	

SB 342 Testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: William Walmsley Jr.

Position: FAV

February 6, 2026

To: Sen. Brian Feldman, Chair, and Sen Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

I am presenting written testimony for your consideration on SB 342, (Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program) which I support and are advocating for passage. Since 2012 I have been weighing the litter, I pick up on my daily dog walk in my neighborhood, which encompasses several streets in the Seabrook Estates and Glenn Estates developments in the Lanham/Seabrook section of Prince George's County. The walk usually takes me an hour following the same route every day. In 2025 I picked up 1,190 lbs. of litter, a 24% increase from 2024. Of this 788 lbs. (66%) were potentially recyclable and the remaining 402 lbs. were landfill trash.

Up until 2024 my data is based on the weight of what I collect which has some drawn backs in impressing on people exactly how much litter is being generated. After last year's attempt at passing a bottle bill failed, I thought that I might be able to do more with my trash pickups to help support passage of a bill this year. Observationally most of the potential recyclables collected are beverage bottles that would be covered under the bill. Starting the last week in April 2024 to help provide more quantitative data to support another bill's passage, I began counting how many bottles that would be covered by the proposed legislation that I was finding on my walks. The counts for the last eight months of 2024 were 2,056 plastic bottles, 234 metal cans, and 319 glass bottles. In 2025 with a full 12 months of collection, I collected a total of 3,486 plastic bottles, 1,403 metal cans, and 740 glass bottles found in the environment in my small section of the state is considerable (keep in mind this is a daily count from the same route each day).

A very effective solution to reduce the bottles is being considered again in this year's legislation session, the proposed Beverage Container Recycling Refund & Litter Reduction Program, SB 342. Similar programs exist in ten states and have proven to result in significant reductions (2/3rds) in the numbers of beverage containers littered no additional cost to local government. It is legislation that needs to pass. We are spending far too much trying to clean up the mess that they make in our communities. I urge you to pass this bill reducing this litter disgracing our state.

Sincerely,

William Walmsley
5915 Justina Drive
Lanham, MD 20706
bwalmsley@gosps.com

CHPR - FWA

Uploaded by: Scott Defife

Position: FWA



February 10, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chairman
Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Bldg.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony for SB0342 – The MD Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Support with Amendment

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

I am testifying on behalf of The Coalition for High Performance Recycling (CHPR) in support of SB0342 with what we believe are “friendly” amendments.

CHPR is a diverse group of consumer brands, environmental nonprofits, material manufacturers, packaging suppliers, and trade associations united in our mission to advance a comprehensive policy model that combines Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging and paper products with Recycling Refunds (RR) – also known as Deposit Return Systems (DRS) or “bottle bills” – for beverage containers.

Having recently passed the EPR for Packaging and Paper Products program last year, Maryland is among the states that have been making or contemplating changes to their recycling and waste management systems because they are failing to increase recovery and recycling rates and to ask the private sector packaging producers to play an increased role in paying for and/or managing that system.

CHPR’s comprehensive approach combines EPR and RR proposals, based on documented best practices from the highest performing recycling systems. This integrated approach aims to significantly enhance the quality, quantity, and reuse of recyclable materials while prioritizing consumer convenience, efficiency, and effectiveness. We believe that this model enhances and complements the EPR system of the new packaging law and will lower overall costs as well.

CHPR supports, with amendments, SB 342/HB 331, which would create a beverage container RR program. RR programs lead to high recycling rates by:

- Placing a refundable deposit on beverage containers at checkout.
- Providing consumers with convenient access to beverage container recycling via collection points where their deposit is refunded.
- Obligating beverage companies to pay for the collection and processing of recyclable beverage containers.
- When designed correctly, both EPR and RR programs operate under the same stewardship principles, where the companies that are responsible for putting packaging into the market must develop, implement and fund programs that drive higher recycling rates at no cost to the consumer. A recycling refund is just that – money that gets returned to consumers when they bring back their beverage containers.
- Paired with EPR programs, RR programs directly address litter and pollution by incentivizing consumers to return their beverage containers and create an optimized system to recover far greater volumes of clean, food-grade glass, plastic, and aluminum – essential for bottle-to-bottle and can-to-can recycling.
- Ten U.S. states currently operate bottle bills. SB 342/HB 331 has the potential to build on successful elements of existing bottle bills to create a modernized, recycling refund program that will reduce litter, drive high redemption and recycling rates and overcome the shortcomings of the current programs, most or many of which haven't been updated in decades.
- If designed right, bottle bills can achieve 80-90% recycling rates, generating high-quality recycled material that can be reincorporated into beverage containers, reducing the need for new plastic, glass and aluminum.
- CHPR is in support of an RR program that is both funded and led by beverage producers and powered by modern technology and infrastructure. To enable this – and relieve the state of unnecessary financial burden – the law must place certain administrative responsibilities with the Beverage Container Stewardship Organization (BCSO).

Recommended Changes:

- **Program administration:** There is an opportunity to align a new RR program with Maryland's recently enacted packaging EPR law, placing program design, operation, and administration on an industry-led nonprofit, rather than the state agency.
 - SB 342/HB 331 currently places tasks on the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) that should be completed by the industry nonprofit Beverage Container Stewardship Organization ("BCSO"), subject to strong oversight by MDE. **CHPR's recommended amendments that limit costs for MDE, without removing the necessary checks and balances on the BCSO.**
 - In keeping with best practices from high-performing RR programs, and to minimize costs to the state, CHPR proposes amending the bill to put responsibility for designing, operating and administering a program plan on the BCSO. Examples of responsibilities that could be shifted to the BCSO and subject to review, approval and oversight by MDE include:

- Managing beverage producer registration and funds
 - Allocating funds towards system investments
 - Redemption center licensing and proposed reimbursement
 - Technology standards
 - Proposing convenience zones
 - The BCSO would be charged with developing a program plan outlining how the organization will meet performance targets for redemption and recycling. Proposed targets and deadlines, redemption infrastructure and processing arrangements, the producer fee structure, statewide education and outreach, performance target measurement, and the approach to developing partnerships would be subject to review and approval by MDE and a stakeholder advisory council.
 - CHPR recommends **maintaining the state's focus on strong oversight**: MDE plays a critical oversight role to ensure a strong program that delivers against performance targets, producer participation and accountability.
 - **These shifts align responsibility with those who fund the program and reflect the same principles as Maryland's packaging EPR law**. When producers have responsibility for program design, operation, administration and performance, they are motivated and incentivized to invest in convenient and innovative redemption infrastructure for consumers, without new state spending or unnecessary cost pressure on consumers.
- **Producer definition and coordination with other PROs**: CHPR recommends amending the producer definition to assign financial responsibility to brand owners, rather than distributors.
 - Brand owners typically have the most control over beverage packaging and material choices and therefore have the greatest ability to influence waste reduction and recycling efficiency.
 - This amendment would help ensure that costs align with market control and incentives, encouraging sustainable packaging choices and simplifying program administration for both the state and businesses.
 - This would also aide in streamlining the relationships between the EPR PRO and the BCSO to work out compensation agreements when covered material ends up in the wrong recovery stream.
 - **Labelling**: CHPR also believes that the bill needs to be amended to eliminate requirements for MD specific SKU/labeling/markings on beverage containers.
 - We understand the motivation for such provisions, but as we have worked on these issues in several states, the state specific labels are generally unworkable in practice, and have also been subject to legal challenges.
 - Having a centralized PRO provides a structure for fraud prevention
 - Our coalition approach has the support of much of the wine and spirits industry beverage producers as we have also adopted language that helps address product that may be bottled, labelled and not yet on shelves. There were

specific provisions used recently in California, when the state DRS was expanded to include wine, spirits and some other product during the same year EPR for packaging was enacted.

- **Flexibility for retail participation:** CHPR appreciates that in-store redemption poses legitimate challenges for retailers due to the impact on revenue-generating floor space, staff costs associated with supervision and cleanup, and potential sanitation issues. CHPR encourages bill sponsors to consider a more flexible model that takes advantage of the convenience of retail redemption without requiring any in-store redemption infrastructure or cash payments.
 - Modern RR programs, such as those in Oregon and British Columbia, provide consumers with convenient access to redemption and innovative, technology-enabled solutions that do not rely on in-store redemption.
 - These programs include express redemption located on the property or in the parking lot of a retail establishment. These sites typically leverage mobile containers and a bag drop program that allow consumers to return multiple containers in bulk and have the corresponding value held in a virtual account (no requirement cash refund requirement). The BCSO would be required to provide compensation and assume lease and all operational and maintenance costs for this redemption infrastructure.
 - Our model is embodied in legislation currently under consideration in the Washington state legislature, and it includes creative options for retail partnerships with the stewardship organization, or BCSO, that may serve as inspiration for amendments to SB0342.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee and Sen. Brooks as well as other sponsors of the bill, please understand we offer these amendments out of respect and with the learnings we have as a broad coalition of stakeholders who include companies that would be a part of the system. We have learned where existing programs get hung up in implementation, and we seek to help Maryland build a new model deposit return system for to proactively address those issues.

Thank you

Scott DeFife

President of the Glass Packaging Institute on behalf of CHPR

Upstream_SUPPORT w_ Changes_MD SB 342.pdf

Uploaded by: Sydney Harris

Position: FWA



February 10, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for SB 342, An act creating the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program, with suggested changes.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Upstream **in support of SB 342**, which will establish a beverage container deposit return system for Maryland with strong targets and incentives for reuse and refill. We are also enclosing some minor suggested updates to the bill language that will ensure the program is workable for anyone choosing reusable containers.

Upstream is a US-based non-profit and leading change agency for the reuse movement in the US and Canada. We spark innovative solutions to help people, communities and businesses shift from single-use to reuse. We believe deposit return systems (DRSs), also known as recycling refunds or bottle bills, are crucial to accelerating the new reuse economy.

SB 342 will establish a DRS for Maryland with strong reuse and refill targets and financial incentives for the beverage sector, which are both crucial to expanding reusable containers. **The beverage sector is ready for a DRS that emphasizes reuse.** Today, beverage reuse systems operate at scale around the world, and virtually all of them use DRSs to get their containers back. These programs not only enjoy higher recovery and recycling rates than Maryland; they also significantly reduce the impacts of beverage packaging. **After a third use, reusable glass bottles are already less impactful than single-use glass, PET or aluminum cans.** Used 25 times and then recycled, reusable glass bottles create 85% fewer climate emissions than single-use glass; 57% fewer than aluminum cans; and 70% fewer than single-use PET. Reusable PET bottles can save up to 40% of the raw materials and 50% of the greenhouse gas emissions compared to the production of single-use PET bottles. Reusables also benefit the ocean: **Oceana estimates that a 10% increase in the**

share of beverages sold in reusables could result in a 22% decrease in marine plastic pollution. This would keep 4.5 to 7.6 *billion* plastic bottles out of the ocean each year.

We suggest the following minor revisions to ensure a clear and workable framework for reusable containers:

- Updated definitions for reusable beverage containers, making a clear distinction between *returnable reusables*, which are returned to producers or third party service providers for professional cleaning and recirculation (for example, a reusable beer bottle returned to a redemption center and transported back to a brewery), and *refillables*, which are owned by consumers and are not subject to deposits (for example, a growler refilled by a consumer at a local brewery).
- Requirements for redemption centers to accept returnable reusables wherever recyclables are accepted, without crushing or otherwise damaging the reusable containers (including via reverse vending machines, which should reject reusables if they cannot avoid crushing them).
- Allowances for producers choosing returnable reusables to increase the deposit on these containers if they wish (to ensure they get them back).
- A requirement for the beverage stewardship organization and Maryland's packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) producer responsibility organization (PRO) to coordinate so that reuse outcomes across both programs are optimized.

These small changes will have major benefits for catalyzing reuse in Maryland's beverage sector. We would be happy to provide specific language if that is helpful, as we have done so in many other states.

Fifty years of data on DRS in the U.S. and around the world demonstrate that refundable deposits are effective at boosting return rates for post-consumer packaging – the single greatest factor in reuse system success. They also create local economic development opportunities and jobs, generate clean streams of recyclable materials through source-separation, and prevent roadside litter and plastic pollution. With the reuse provisions in SB 342, reusable containers will increase in market share and amplify these outcomes. SB 342 will propel Maryland toward a true circular economy with reuse at its core. We thank you for considering this bill and strongly encourage you to support it. For any questions, please contact me at sydney@upstreamolutions.org.

Thank you for all you do,

Sydney Harris
Policy Director, Upstream

SB0342_UNF_MSLBA_MD Beverage Container Recycling R

Uploaded by: David Marberger

Position: UNF



**MARYLAND STATE
LICENSED BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION**

150 E Main Street, Suite 104, Westminster, MD 21157

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 10, 2026

Senate Bill 342 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association (MSLBA), which consists of approximately 850 Maryland businesses holding alcoholic beverage licenses (restaurants, bars, taverns and package stores), opposes Senate Bill 342.

This legislation would require retailers, such as package stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business, either by establishing a “dedicated area” to store the returned containers or acquiring a reverse vending machine. In addition, they must pay the person redeeming the container in cash in some cases.

The package stores owned by our members are typically 3,000 to 5,000 square feet in size. The majority of this square footage is dedicated to shelving, sales and consumer transactions, coolers, walk-in boxes, and storage area for product that has yet to be put on the shelf. Senate Bill 342 would require each retailer to set aside either dedicated storage space or an area for a reverse vending machine. These stores are simply not equipped to accommodate storage of redeemable containers, and the space needed to do so would be substantial, considering that a retailer must accept any containers that are brought in, unless they are rejected due to their condition.

For these reasons, MSLBA respectfully requests that the Committee give this legislation an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

Jack Milani

Legislative Chair

SB0342-EEE_MACo_OPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 342

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

Date: February 10, 2026

From: Dominic Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 342. This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. While well-intentioned, the program would divert high-value scrap materials from county recycling facilities and create a significant, ongoing unfunded mandate for local budgets—with only temporary fiscal assistance in return.

Local governments have spent decades building robust curbside recycling programs. Counties rely on the sale of scrap materials collected through these programs to help offset the high costs of waste management and recycling operations. SB 342 would redirect some of the most valuable commodities—aluminum cans and plastic bottles—away from county curbside systems and into a separate redemption stream, while offering only time-limited compensation through 2031.

The legislation designates a temporary portion of program revenues through 2031 to compensate counties for documented, program-attributable net revenue losses. This provision not only acknowledges the likelihood of financial harm to local governments, but also places the administrative burden on counties to track, document, and prove those losses in order to be made whole.

Ultimately, SB 342 undermines the stability of local waste management and recycling systems. By diverting the very materials that help subsidize county recycling programs, it risks weakening existing services and confusing residents who have been encouraged to use single-stream curbside recycling. For these reasons, MACo recommends an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 342.

SB0342_UNF_NWRA_MD Beverage Container Recycling Re

Uploaded by: Drew Vetter

Position: UNF

Collect
Recycle
Innovate



National Waste
& Recycling AssociationSM

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 10, 2026

Senate Bill 342 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA-MD) is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. NWRA-MD and its members **oppose** Senate Bill 342.

Senate Bill 342 proposes to establish a statewide beverage container recycling refund and litter reduction program. While we appreciate the sponsor's intent to increase the percentage of beverage containers recycled in the State and reduce litter, the unintended negative impacts of such a program on Maryland's existing recycling infrastructure outweigh any potential benefit.

Bottle bill expansions present an economic and disruptive burden to both recycling markets and local taxpayers. Requiring consumers to transport and deposit their recyclables at collection facilities removes up to 50 percent of plastics and aluminum from recycling streams. Reducing these valuable commodities increases curbside recycling costs for customers and municipalities. It may also threaten public and private recycling facilities, forcing them to cut jobs or shut down due to revenue loss.

Passing a bottle bill in Maryland will create duplication in the State's recycling process. Recycling technologies have advanced significantly since bottle bills were first adopted around the United States. Under a bottle bill, there would be two redundant recycling systems: a bottle bill system that recovers a limited percentage of the recycling stream and material recovery facilities (MRFs) that recover all other recyclables. Materials considered under the bottle bill expansion are already being recycled by MRFs. Solutions are needed for hard-to-recycle materials MRFs cannot process (i.e. film plastic, flexible pouches, toys, carpets, tires, textiles, mattresses, solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, and appliances).

Maryland residents would pay for two recycling systems under this proposal: a per-container fee under the expanded bottle bill system and a residential curbside or drop-off service for solid waste and recycling. They will also be directly impacted by additional costs: an upfront container deposit and potentially higher prices for consumer goods as producers pass along their handling costs. States initially adopted bottle bills as litter abatement programs before curbside recycling was commonplace. They are used by just ten states as jurisdictions have adopted curbside recycling as a more effective method of managing and promoting recycling.

Implementing a bottle bill in Maryland will harm recycling because the containers targeted for the expansion are currently being managed effectively in local recycling programs. They are key items in the recycling bin that have a positive commodity value. The value of those containers helps underwrite the cost of delivering everyone's recycling services. Without these valuable recyclable containers in the general recyclables stream, the cost to municipalities, and ultimately Maryland resident taxpayers, to continue their recycling programs will assuredly go up. For these reasons, we respectfully request an **unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 342.

For more information:

Andrew G. Vetter
410-244-7000

Visit our website www.wasterecycling.org

SB 342_MDCC_Maryland Beverage Container Recycling

Uploaded by: Hannah Allen

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 342

Date: February 10, 2026

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Unfavorable

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

Senate Bill 342 (SB 342) would establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers. A producer would be prohibited from selling, offering for sale, or distributing or importing into the State a redeemable beverage container unless the producer is registered with the Maryland Department of the Environment, pays a fee, and is part of a beverage container stewardship organization.

Maryland's business community supports policies that improve recycling outcomes and reduce litter. However, SB 342 would impose significant new costs and operational burdens on retailers, distributors, and consumers, while duplicating recycling policy the State has only just enacted.

In 2025, Maryland enacted a comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law for packaging. That law was the result of extensive stakeholder engagement and is intended to improve recycling systems statewide. Regulations have not yet been finalized, nor has implementation begun. Passing an additional, highly complex bottle deposit system before EPR is operational is premature and risks confusion, inefficiency, and unnecessary cost increases for businesses and consumers.

Retailers, particularly grocery stores, operate on thin margins. SB 342 would require many stores to serve as redemption locations, forcing them to dedicate limited retail space to bottle storage or machines, lease and maintain specialized equipment, and staff and sanitize redemption areas. These burdens are especially challenging for small-format stores and grocers in underserved communities, where space constraints and added costs may discourage investment.

Additionally, states with bottle deposit programs have experienced widespread fraud, including redemption of out-of-state containers. Maryland's proximity to neighboring states without bottle bills makes this a significant enforcement concern, yet SB 342 does not adequately address these risks or the associated administrative costs.

Maryland has already taken a major step forward on recycling through EPR. The State should allow that framework to be implemented and evaluated before layering on additional mandates that raise costs, strain retailers, and disproportionately impact vulnerable communities.

For these reasons, the Chamber respectfully requests an **unfavorable report** on **SB 342**.

MWA Bottle Bill SB342-HB232 Letter 020526.pdf

Uploaded by: Janna Howley

Position: UNF



**MARYLAND
WINE**

TO: EEE, E&T and ECM Committees

FROM: Maryland Wineries Association

DATE: February 10, 2026

RE: Letter of concern regarding SB 342/ HB331

Chairs Feldman, Korman, Valderrama and Committee members,

The Maryland Wineries Association (MWA) oppose SB 342/HB 331 which requires the creation of a Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

The Maryland Wineries Association consists of eighty plus Maryland businesses that create 25,300 jobs across the state. Maryland wineries are destinations that drive tourism, business and tax dollars to the State and localities, contributing \$495,780,000 to State and Local taxes in 2025.

Maryland wineries are, and have long been, effective stewards of the environment and their land. They are also supporters of the green economy, but this bill does not achieve the positive environmental goals it seeks, and it imposes significant physical and financial costs on Maryland wineries.

Maryland wineries are faced with a dilemma: glass bottles are the best way to store, serve and sell wine, but unfortunately glass bottles are notoriously difficult to recycle. We are currently unable to effectively recycle our glass bottles, and the infrastructure does not exist in Maryland to recycle these bottles. If this bill goes into effect, we will be forced to collect bottles that cannot be recycled in Maryland or in the surrounding states. The legislation will impose a burden on us with no benefit to Maryland's environmental goals.

Over the past several years MWA has proactively worked to attract businesses to the State that can clean AND reuse glass bottles. Unfortunately, we have not yet achieved that goal. In order to achieve the goals of this bill, the infrastructure for recycling glass bottles needs to exist and that infrastructure does not exist today. We continue to look for options like this that create a new business in Maryland, reduce the amount of glass in our waste stream, and support our state's environmental goals.

Accordingly, while we agree with the goals that this bill seeks to achieve, we must respectfully oppose the bill due to the inadequate infrastructure that exists and the burden it will impose on our members.

Sincerely,

Janna Howley, Executive Director

MARYLAND WINERIES ASSOCIATION

Representing Maryland's Wine Industry Since 1984

1783 Forest Drive, #343 • Annapolis, MD 21401 • www.MarylandWine.com

SB342 recycling.pdf

Uploaded by: Kirk McCauley

Position: UNF



WMDA/CAR Service Station
and Automotive Repair Association

Chair: Brian J Feldman and members of Education, Energy, and Environmental Committee

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

Position: Unfavorable

My name is Kirk McCauley, my employer is WMDA/CAR, we represent service stations, convenience stores, and repair facilities across the state as a non-profit trade group established in 1937.

I know sponsors have good intentions and think this bill will be self-funded and eventually it might, but that is a way down the road where this bill to pass. Start-up and MDE cost and plus personal to administer, vetting of the process and vendors to prevent fraud in a program that would be susceptible to fraud. That is just at Maryland's end of the program.

Consumers will pay more for their favorite drink and many of the elderly, non-driving, busy consumers purchase beverages online for delivery, will these same companies that deliver pick up and pay consumer for the overcharge on containers. Consumers are getting beat up badly on groceries and drinks currently and this will only add to that.

Retailers will have to have employees collect containers or empty self-service reverse vending machines and store bottles. Either way retailers are giving away valuable floor space, cleaning an unsanitary mess up as bottles managed in store. Retailer collecting on extra money they paid for product and money they paid in refund to consumers. One big bill, what could go wrong?

What experience does the Chesapeake Bay Trust have in running a program of epic proportions, effects every person and Every corner of the state?

We have county recycling centers now and I think by enhancing what we already have, it would be a cost-effective way to accomplish recycling goals.

We ask for unfavorable vote SB342

Any questions can be addressed to Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or kmccauley@wmda.net

ABA Testimony in Opposition to Maryland SB342 - Fi

Uploaded by: Megan Daum

Position: UNF



The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 10, 2026

Re: Oppose Senate Bill 342- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate the opportunity to share the reasoning behind our opposition to Senate Bill 342.

American Beverage Association (ABA) is the trade association representing the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the United States. ABA represents hundreds of beverage producers, distributors, franchise companies and supporting businesses across the country.

The beverage industry plays an important role in advancing the circular economy. Our containers are specifically designed and optimized for circularity. Our PET bottles and aluminum cans are purposefully designed to be 100 percent recyclable, have high commodity values, and when collected and recycled, can become new bottles and cans. Our industry launched its “Every Bottle Back” campaign in late 2019, recognizing that new programs, policies, and investments are needed to increase the recycling of our bottles, cans, and other valuable materials.

Our industry worked with Senator Augustine and his committee on the breakthrough EPR program that was signed into law last year. In fact, Governor Moore thanked the Maryland-Delaware-DC Beverage Association at the signing. The enactment of this law capped a multi-year effort of collaboration, contention, and compromise, and Maryland’s leaders should take pride in becoming only the sixth state to adopt this significant commitment to advancing the circular economy. We look forward to working with the Department of the Environment, Circular Action Alliance, and other key stakeholders to implement this law and optimize residential recycling for packaging and paper products throughout Maryland.

SB342 could impact the state’s EPR for packaging law. By focusing on the implementation of the packaging program right now, we set ourselves up for success in the future.

We believe that comprehensively managing the full range of covered materials in the EPR for packaging law is the best approach for Maryland at this time. Maryland’s packaging law mandates producer funding to enhance residential recycling access, education, and infrastructure for the entire state and covers all consumer packaging and paper products including junk mail, food wrappers, cereal boxes, clamshells, meat trays, soup cans, shampoo, detergent jugs, liquor bottles, e-commerce bubble wrap, and more, regardless of whether or not the material is recycled or recyclable. Building out that program, which will support and optimize recycling access, education and infrastructure throughout the state of Maryland, should be the focus right now.

Maryland’s EPR law will take advantage of and build upon recycling infrastructure already on the ground throughout the state. According to The Recycling Partnership’s latest *State of*

Recycling Report for 2024, Maryland currently benefits from 96% of all residents having access to recycling. That's a lot of groundwork laid, and a lot of money already invested. In fact, ABA's *Every Bottle Back* program proudly contributed to the \$9.5 million investment that provided recycling carts to every home in Baltimore during the pandemic.

Introducing a brand-new deposit return system will require new infrastructure, from buildings, sheds, depots, kiosks, reverse vending machines, loading docks, processing facilities, as well as independent financial management, logistics, and administrative systems.

With at-home recycling access as high as it is in Maryland, residents are accustomed to putting recyclables, including beverage containers, in receptacles at home. Asking them to remove and transport beverage containers to redemption facilities puts consumer behavior groundwork at risk. The EPR law passed in Maryland last year will support and build upon the state's excellent at-home recycling foundation by addressing the entire recycling system from robust and meaningful recycling education at homes and throughout the state, while improving collection and processing to end markets.

Deposit return system fraud remains a largely hidden but serious problem. Redemption fraud occurs when individuals or organizations bring non-deposit containers into a deposit state for illegal refunds. Because Maryland does not border any existing deposit states, each of its four state-borders poses a risk for large-scale redemption fraud. A recent case in California ordered a company to pay \$140 million in restitution and penalties for fabricating redemption records.

Deposits also can result in sales fraud, which affects retailers of all kinds as well as beverage distributors. Sales fraud, known as transshipping in our industry, occurs when deposit-eligible containers are purchased without a deposit in neighboring states and transshipped for sale into deposit states. The middleman pockets the deposits, and local distributors are forced to absorb refund costs and the expense of collecting empty containers. All of which raises the costs of doing business and leads to higher consumer prices. This impact would come on top of the loss of beverage purchases businesses in neighboring states. Maryland consumers shopping out of state could avoid paying the 10¢ or 15¢ deposits on containers and experience in other deposit states confirms the adverse consequences for retailers near the border.

American Beverage and its members are committed to strong environmental outcomes, including increased recycling rates, for the state of Maryland. It's why we were so involved in the passage and support of EPR for packaging, which will fund recycling access, education and infrastructure throughout the state and establish meaningful targets for success. We welcome any questions from the Committee. Thank you very kindly for your time.

Megan Daum
Vice President, Sustainability

SB342_RestaurantAssoc_Thompson_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Melvin Thompson

Position: UNF



SENATE BILL 342

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

February 10, 2026

Position: Unfavorable

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Education, Energy & Environment Committee:

The Restaurant Association of Maryland opposes SB 342. This legislation would require beverage distributors to include a redeemable beverage container refund value as part of the wholesale price of beverage containers sold to restaurants, bars, and other retailers. The legislation prohibits restaurants, bars and other “on-premises sellers” from including the refund value of redeemable beverage containers in the retail price when sold to customers.

Despite language in the bill that allows on-premises sellers to arrange for pickup of empty redeemable beverage containers (with refunds and materials handling fee paid) by a beverage container stewardship organization or via bag drops, many concerns remain about the related logistics for on-premises sellers.

Convenient redemption options for on-premises sellers located in less-populated areas of the state may be limited. Moreover, restaurants and bars in locations with limited outside storage space (such as downtown/city areas) or in properties with shared disposal facilities (e.g., shopping centers, malls, sports/entertainment venues, the airport, etc.) would face challenges separately storing their beverage containers for pickup and ensuring that the correct on-premises seller receives the refunds. These businesses would also need to secure any such storage areas to guard against theft.

For on-premises sellers that are unable to overcome related logistical challenges, the container deposit paid to wholesalers would ultimately amount to an unavoidable tax.

For these reasons, we oppose SB 342 and request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melvin R. Thompson" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melvin R. Thompson
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy

SB342_MAPDA_unf (2026).pdf

Uploaded by: Mike O'Halloran

Position: UNF



Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association
P.O. Box 711 ★ Annapolis, MD 21404
410-693-2226 ★ www.mapda.com

TO: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

FROM: Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association

DATE: February 12, 2026

RE: **SENATE BILL 342** – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

On behalf of Maryland's convenience stores and energy distributors, MAPDA urges the committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB342.

This legislation would require retailers, such as convenience stores, to accept redeemable beverage containers at their place of business and pay out the return fee. Additionally, the retailers would be at the forefront of having to charge customers a significant product increase at the cash register.

Border issues drive up costs and hurt local economies. A container deposit represents a significant price increase, especially for less expensive products. That value creates unintended consequences that include fraudulent redemption of containers and loss of business.

Our locations are not made for a deposit scheme. Although there is an exemption for smaller locations it is not reflective of the layout and size of the emerging convenience store market, as the neighborhood convenience store has evolved into the local grocery store providing a host of products from fresh fruits, eggs, and a variety of beverage offerings. The requirement for dedicated space of dirty and used beverage containers, the evaluation of valid container returns, and the responsibility to payout money on products likely not purchased in the store makes this legislation unworkable and unsustainable in a small business environment.

There is an easier way to recycle. Recycling systems should focus on all recyclables – be easy, convenient, and equitable for all. The deposit system does not meet any of those important components.

For these reasons, MAPDA respectfully requests an unfavorable committee report on SB342.

Feeding and fueling the economy through gas, coffee, food, heating oil and propane.

MAPDA is an association of convenience stores and energy distributors in Maryland, Delaware & the District of Columbia.

2026 MBWA SB 342 Beverage Container Recycling Refun

Uploaded by: NICK MANIS

Position: UNF



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

President

George N. Manis, Esq. (1929-2014)

Executive Director

Nicholas G. Manis

Executive Director

John F. Favazza, Esq.

Deputy Director

12 FRANCIS STREET
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401
(410) 263-7882
FAX (410) 263-7925

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Page 2

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

MRN re SB342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling

Uploaded by: Peter Houstle

Position: UNF



February 10, 2026

**Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Re: SB342 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

The Maryland Recycling Network's members are county and municipal government sustainability and recycling managers, private sector recyclers, non-profit recyclers and citizens who support recycling. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

We strongly support increasing recycling in Maryland. We supported the packaging and paper extended producer responsibility (EPR) law that MDE is now implementing. In doing so, we supported holistic legislation covering virtually **all** packages, including beverage containers. We are an active member of the EPR for Packaging and Paper Products Advisory Council. We look forward to working with MDE and the Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) as MDE prepares regulations for the performance goals, including recycling rates, affecting **all** packages. Our goal is a successful law that will be a model for other states.

Our Concerns Over Multiple Packaging-Related Laws

We understand the challenges MDE faces in implementing such a comprehensive law. In fact, the agency is not responsible for launching just one EPR program. MDE is also implementing the 2024 paint EPR law. Doing two programs at once is challenging. Fortunately, MDE has talented, dedicated staff working hard to meet those challenges.

In addition, two packaging PROs will complicate compliance for producers whose products include deposit containers, non-deposit beverages and other products. Their costs, reporting requirements and responsibilities will increase while they will receive no benefits from this diffuse set of authorities and requirements. Those two packaging PROs will also be complicated for MDE to manage as its staff navigates two separate packaging laws, regulations, and PROs for deposit beverage containers and all other packages.

Needs Assessment

The legislature required MDE to perform a Statewide Needs Assessment before the 2025 passage of the packaging EPR bill. The Needs Assessment provides a comprehensive view of Maryland's existing recycling status and infrastructure. It briefly considers container deposits and concludes "Additionally, while bottle bills and EPR for packaging programs may complement each other, it is important to consider their timing and implementation so that they do compete with each other for high-value materials or face other unintended consequences." (see pages 4-6) Clearly, due to a typo, the word "not" was intended to be between "do" and "compete". MDE should fully implement the law that covers all packages before creating PROs for small portions of packaging.

Other Concerns

In our deposit bill testimony in previous years, we urged the Committee to recognize Maryland’s unique infrastructure for collecting and processing recyclables. Our state is fortunate to have seven processing facilities, known as Materials Recovery Facilities or MRFs. Four are publicly owned, three are privately owned. In addition, three privately owned “dump and bale” facilities process paper packages and products. When Maryland’s PRO program plan is approved (probably two years from now), their relationship with local governments and other customers will change. At this point we don’t know what that relationship will be. Under deposit programs, beverage containers are diverted from curbside collection to the new system. As a result, processing facilities and their customers lose that revenue stream. This causes immediate harm to both the facilities and their customers. These materials are only five percent of processed recyclables but can supply one-third to one-half of MRF revenue. Processing costs will go up when that revenue stream is lost. While the bill attempts to buffer losses to publicly-owned MRFs, the formula grants relief with one hand while taking it away with the other (see 9-1748). A new section (see 9-1751) attempts to reimburse all MRFs but misses the mark.

Conclusion

The Maryland Recycling Network urges the legislature to defer action on new laws for specific types of packages until the existing packaging EPR law and the paint EPR law are fully operational.

Sincerely,



Peter M. Houstle
Executive Vice President
Maryland Recycling Network

The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact MRN via email phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

Croghan_testimony HB0331_SB0342_02.06.2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Croghan

Position: UNF

TESTIMONY

TO: CHAIR MARC KORMAN, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION
CHAIR BRIAN FELDMAN, EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

FROM: TOM CROGHAN
OWNER & EXECUTIVE WINEMAKER, THE VINEYARDS AT DODON
FOUNDING CHAIR, DODON CENTER FOR ECOLOGICAL FARMING

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO HB0331 AND SB0342

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Situation. HB0331 and SB0342 propose a redemption program for recyclable packaging, including wine bottles, in the state. This memorandum describes some of the consequences of the proposed legislation on Class 4 wine producers.

Background. The Vineyards at Dodon (Dodon) is a small farm winery in Davidsonville that grows, produces, and bottles approximately 3,000 cases of wine each year. Most sales are made directly to consumers at the farm, split evenly between on- and off-premises sales. In 2024, Dodon was chosen as one of five finalists (out of the 11,688 U.S. wineries at the time) for Wine Enthusiast magazine's American Winery of the Year because of its environmental efforts. The nominating writer specifically highlighted Dodon's initiative to promote wine bottle reuse in the mid-Atlantic region as a key reason for her nomination. In other words, Dodon has long been recognized for its support of recycling and reuse of beverage containers.

Maryland wineries use approximately 2,000,000 wine bottles (about 1,000 tons) each year. Recycling a portion of these would significantly reduce the pressure on landfills, but collecting and crushing them has little effect on carbon dioxide emissions. In contrast, reusing a wine bottle decreases those emissions by 5 pounds per reuse. In other words, if each bottle is reused three times annually, a successful reuse program could cut the state's carbon footprint by 15,000 t eCO₂.

Despite claims of widespread demand for used glass, recycling wine bottles is not currently practiced. For example, Dodon's recycling partner, Waste Management, **does not accept** the more than 10,000 bottles we sell for on-premises consumption each year.

Analysis. HB0331/SB0342 presents a significant opportunity to increase the number of wine bottles recycled or reused. It also includes a provision to evaluate the investments needed to reuse containers for at least 10% of beverage containers sold.

Maryland's Class 4 wineries will be affected by this bill both as producers—those who fill bottles—and as sellers—those who sell filled beverage containers. While small wineries (those with annual global sales under \$5 million) are exempt from the producer's provisions, they are not exempt from their seller's responsibilities. Two provisions stand out.

1. **Retailers with less than 3000 sf of sales space and 150 sf of shelf space would need to give refunds for ANY container of the same material and size as those sold at the facility.** (Page 17, line 24.) Dodon is the only wine seller within a 5-mile radius of our facility, creating a significant risk that the farm will become the main refund point for all wine bottles in Davidsonville and Harwood. Although the bill does not specify whether Dodon would be responsible for collecting the bottles it refunds, it is reasonable to assume that it would also collect, store, and return them to a central collection point. In other words, the bill appears to require us, as farmers producing a value-added agricultural product, to establish a new bottle-redemption operation. As a preserved farm, this would conflict with our contract with the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, which prohibits non-agricultural activities.
2. **The bill requires that the refund value be included in the listed price for wholesale and off-premises containers, but it specifies that the refund value not be included in the price for on-premises containers.** (Page 14, line 19). Since we sell wine for both on- and off-premises consumption from the same registers—and sometimes to the same customer at the same time—we would have two different prices at the register. This could confuse everyone.

I am also worried that the bill's provisions on reuse, intended mainly to explore the possibility, are so weak that they amount to little more than "wishful" thinking. The legislature's well-known skepticism of "studies" is well placed.

Recommendations. Although bottle-deposit schemes are the most effective way to boost returns, any reasonable interpretation of the bill could have severe consequences for Maryland's small wineries. It could be amended to:

1. Exempt small sellers from any redemption and refund requirements.
2. Allow explicit listing of the deposit instead of including it in the price.
3. Strengthen the reuse provisions.

In the absence of significant amendments to the bill, I ask that you oppose HB0331/SB0342.

SB342 MD DE DC Beverage Opposition Testimony Final

Uploaded by: Tiffany Harvey

Position: UNF



The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy and the Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 10, 2026

Re: Oppose Senate Bill 342- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate this opportunity to share our opposition to Senate Bill 342 and ask that your committees issue unfavorable reports on Senate Bill 342.

The MD-DE-DC Beverage Association is the trade association representing the local soft drink industry. Our members have a strong presence across the State of Maryland. The members of our association produce and distribute a wide array of refreshment beverages through a network of local bottlers who live and work in and around the State of Maryland. We have facilities located in Allegany County, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Calvert County, Carroll County, Charles County, Frederick County, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Washington County and Wicomico County. Our industry provides direct employment for residents; these jobs are some of the best paid, highest-benefit jobs available to people with and without college degrees. Many are union jobs. Beverage sales in Maryland contribute to the revenues of numerous small businesses, grocery stores, restaurants, cafes, bodegas, theaters, arenas, food trucks, and others.

The beverage industry also plays an important role in advancing the circular economy. Our packaging is specifically designed and optimized for recycling. We carefully design PET bottles and aluminum cans to be 100% recyclable. Our containers have a high commodity value in the post-consumer market, and they are made specifically so that they can be made into new bottles and cans again and again. The industry has invested in local and regional recycling infrastructure for more than 40 years. Our companies have made commitments to collect and recycle packaging waste, to incorporate more recycled content into our PET bottles, and to reduce the amount of new plastic in our bottles. More information on the industry's sustainability efforts can be found at <https://everybottleback.org>.

Competing systems

The MD-DC-DE Beverage Association was actively involved in the multiyear process to draft and pass EPR for consumer packaging and paper products in Maryland. We are committed to the success of that model law which will ensure that all Maryland residents have access to recycling and relieve municipalities and taxpayers from associated financial burdens. Because EPR covers all



consumer packaging and paper products, regardless of recyclability, and funds recycling education, access, collection and processing, the entire system will be supported and optimized to achieve robust environmental outcomes.

A bottle deposit would significantly impact the state's EPR law by substantially removing the beverage sector. Beverage containers are largely recognized among the most valuable materials in the recycling stream. Taking them out of the EPR program would raise costs for remaining producers, damage the efficiency of the enhanced recycling system in the state, and generally make it more challenging for the program to achieve its goals.

We feel strongly that comprehensively managing the full range of covered materials under the EPR for packaging law should be the priority for recycling in Maryland. We support building out that program and ensuring its success.

Deposit system fraud

The impact of a 10¢ or higher deposit in Maryland creates an environment ripe for massive fraud, which would raise costs for Maryland businesses and reduce revenues to the State and local governments. In 2024, Connecticut raised its deposit from 5¢ to 10¢ while bordering states like New York and Massachusetts with deposit systems did not. Connecticut is now overwhelmed by fraudulent redemption.

Maryland's bordering states do not have deposit laws, which creates potential risks of cross-border container returns if appropriate safeguards are not established. Managing and preventing fraudulent redemptions can place additional operational and compliance demands on industry and government. Experience in other jurisdictions with long-standing and outdated deposit programs, such as California, New York, and Connecticut, indicates that even with enforcement mechanisms and controls in place, fully eliminating fraudulent redemption remains challenging. This underscores the importance of robust guardrails and oversight in any proposed system.ⁱ

- The State of New York's investigative unit has documented the loss of tens of millions of dollars a year from fraud emanating from locales hundreds of miles away.
- Connecticut recently increased its deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents and is trying to stop the flood of containers coming in weekly from outside the state.
- In 2023, California prosecuted eight members of one family for redeeming \$7.6 million in fraudulent deposits over an 8-month period.
- In New York, a New-Jersey based distributor [was fined \\$500,000](#) for defrauding the N.Y. bottle deposit system.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) created a statewide multi-agency effort to help prevent returnable container schemes and underreporting that it says has an impact to the state [of hundreds of millions of dollars](#).



"New York's highly successful Bottle Bill is an unfortunate target for unscrupulous criminals looking to make big bucks from the state's nickels," DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said. "This newly launched effort will help foster coordination among state and local partners across the many jurisdictions included in Bottle Bill enforcement to help recoup lost revenue, hold violators accountable, and eliminate the competitive disadvantage experienced by companies that play by the rules."

As mentioned, a virtual tsunami of empty containers is flowing into Connecticut from the entire region since Connecticut became the only state in the region with a 10¢ deposit in January 2024. Redemption rates for many companies, including some of our members, exceed 100%, and Connecticut has no solution for the problem. Maryland would be setting itself up for the same situation along the entire length of its border with Delaware, the District and Virginia, hurting Maryland businesses and impacting the integrity of recycling in the state.

The parameters described in these bills about what party is obligated to comply with how deposits are collected/initiated, performance targets, convenience standards, scope of containers, and reimbursements to materials recovery facilities (MRFs) are all unprecedented and untested. As noted, the beverage industry has expressed its support for deposit programs that operate according to demonstrated best practices, but aside from the governance of this system and retention of unclaimed deposits to finance the program, little else in this bill gives us confidence that this is a workable framework for a deposit refund system.

Other states invest millions of dollars in bottle deposit fraud prevention each year and have been met with limited success. This bill seeks to shift the burden of fraud prevention from the government to a private non-profit. It also includes a provision to use state-specific UPCs to discourage fraud, which is a fundamental misunderstanding of cross-state commerce and how consumer goods are manufactured and distributed today. State-specific UPCs would require dedicated supply chains to provide beverage containers only to Maryland, which is a practical impossibility given regional economics, overlapping distribution territories and retail chains, as well as the operation of global supply chains.

Cost and burden to consumers

The burden of paying for the deposit system could fall to consumers and local small businesses. Raising prices a minimum of 10¢ per container ignores the rising costs and uncertainty consumers are facing not just in the grocery store, but throughout the economy. Although the deposit can be redeemed, a \$2.40 per case price increase at the point of sale plus the cost to build and operate an entirely new system to handle the redeemed containers will harm consumers, especially those whose budgets cannot absorb costs that might be viewed as marginal by some.

The proposed deposit system is inconvenient for consumers. A particular concern with this redemption system is access to redemption for those of limited means, families without cars, people who are disabled, and elderly citizens. A 10¢ deposit is a 10¢ tax if you do not have the time,



ability, or access to use a redemption site. That burden is going to fall most heavily on low-income households, making this a regressive policy. Families who must rely on public transportation to travel to a redemption center or retailer who takes redemptions will find it particularly inconvenient to recycle. Adding the task of separating bottles and cans, keeping track of every bottle or can purchased in the State, cleaning them, keeping them from breaking and then transporting them to a redemption center with the hope that they are accepted is not convenient.

Cost and burden on small businesses

This proposal would force small businesses to take on the costs of running the bottle deposit program that by design will impose open-ended fee increases on local businesses and do nothing to prevent fraudulent redemptions from flooding Maryland businesses, forcing them to pay for redemptions on which no deposit was paid. These costs have been documented in the few states that have a system similar to that proposed here. Those costs could be considerable. This proposal would:

- Impose an open-ended deposit that increases automatically on an annual basis, regardless of the financial circumstances of consumers and small businesses;
- Require more staff to handle the new recycling tasks imposed on business owners;
- Force Maryland businesses to take on costs of running the bottle deposit program, including making room in their stores for the influx of bottles and cans;
- Force local stores and markets to raise prices on their products, adding yet another cost increase for Maryland families.

The bill imposes open-ended deposit values and handling fees along with target redemption rates higher than any existing law in the country. These factors are setting the stage for a program that would be exceedingly expensive to operate and administer and burdensome to consumers.

- Redemption rate targets span from 70% in 2030 to 90% in 2033. No US deposit system has maintained a redemption rate of 90%.

The bill allows for the deposit to increase indefinitely. It is set to be 10¢ or 15¢ on larger containers beginning one year after enactment of the bill. The value increases 5¢ every five years if targets are not met for two consecutive, preceding years. This means there is no limit to how high the deposit could go, so no limit to how high prices of beverages could go. The higher the prices, the greater the amount of sales Maryland businesses will lose to neighboring states that have no increased prices from deposits. Given the escalating cost of living expenses in Maryland, the rising cost of items like food and gas, it seems ill timed to pass a bill making Maryland more expensive.

The administrative, reporting, and financial burden on the State is substantial. For example, massive quantities of data must be transferred to the State.



Bottle bill infrastructure

A bottle bill requires entirely new infrastructure, end-to-end, to manage returned beverage containers. Special equipment or facilities – such as new trucks and processing locales - must be established to take back empties, meaning these facilities must be sited. Sb342 will require numerous redemption centers that must be licensed, as set forth in the bill. In addition to obtaining licenses, retailers must consider and ensure compliance with their existing lease agreement, traffic conditions, heavy truck access to ensure proper collection of the redeemed bottles, the cost of devoting employees to redemption work, the cost of reverse maintenance and ensuring the canners do not create additional litter concerns when searching recycling bins and trash dumpsters for redeemable bottles and cans.

New trucks and drivers will need to be on the road to pick up containers from these locations regularly, to provide audit and oversight of the pickup, and to transport the containers to new processing facilities to be counted and verified (if they weren't already) and prepared for sale as commodities. Those facilities also need to be sited, approved, and funded. None of this utilizes any of the recycling infrastructure already established in Maryland.

Bottle bill history and activity

Understanding bottle bill activity in the District, Delaware and Virginia seems critically important to your considerations of SB342. Delaware's bottle deposit law was repealed in 2010. The District of Columbia and Virginia have both seen bottle bills introduced before their respective legislative bodies. The Virginia bills have not moved from their committees of origin. Virginia followed Maryland's lead on a comprehensive study on litter and recycling. The bill introduced in the District of Columbia was not favorably viewed or marked up by the first committee of origin. A copy of the memo on the bill produced by those law makers is attached.

Ten states have bottle deposits laws in place. The first state to pass a law was Oregon in 1971 and the last state was Hawaii in 2002. Several states have had to make significant changes to their laws to address issues like fraud and declining rates of redemption. Over the last 20 years, no state has implemented a new bottle deposit law.

Redemption rates in states with deposit return systems

[Redemption rates in most states with bottle bills](#) decreased in 2024 compared with the previous year, according to the latest data from the Container Recycling Institute (CRI). The numbers reflect a downward redemption rate trend since 2017, according to CRI.ⁱⁱ The state with the most dramatic decrease in returns was Massachusetts, which saw returns decrease by 21%. Massachusetts, which has the lowest return rate in the country, went from a 57% return rate in 2017 to a 35% return rate in 2024. The one exception is the fraud-fueled Connecticut program discussed above.

Beverage containers and litter

Litter control has been the main justification for deposits since the 1950s. At the time, there was concern over broken glass and the introduction of metal cans. But litter is a much more complex



problem than beverage bottles and cans. A more careful look at the data reveals the true picture of the role deposits play in litter.

In its [2020 National Litter Study, Keep America Beautiful](#) (KAB) estimated that beverage containers accounted for 5.6% of total litter, aggregating roadway and waterway sites.ⁱⁱⁱ Note that higher incidence of beverage containers is likely in areas like parks and beaches where people are more likely to have containers with them. Proponents of the legislation cite beach cleanup data as a measure of the litter problem with respect to containers but such data is likely to overstate the prevalence of containers throughout a city or state because as KAB states, waterways, especially those that are hard to reach, are not regularly serviced for litter cleanup on a consistent basis like roads and parks and so litter along waterways is more likely to accumulate over time.

More than 94% of litter would be unaffected by deposits; the argument that bottles and cans are “worth picking up” for a refund doesn’t address or consider other litter like food packaging, discarded trash, used tires, construction debris, coffee cups and lids, and the wide range of other littered items.

Conclusion

Maryland took a significant step forward last year in the passage of Senate Bill 901 and we are currently working with the MDE and the EPR Advisory Council on standing up Maryland’s extended producer responsibility program (EPR). You will recall that our association testified in support of EPR as well as the needs assessment legislation that preceded Senate Bill 901 (2025). We feel strongly that letting the EPR law succeed is the best strategy for Maryland.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. The MD-DE-DC Beverage Association opposes SB342 but as demonstrated during the 2025 Legislative Session and the active role our association played in assisting in the passage of SB901, we want to see improved recycling in Maryland.

We are happy to discuss any of the aforementioned issues with the Committee. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Tiffany Harvey
Executive Director, MD-DE-DC Beverage Association

ⁱ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/A3469>; <https://legiscan.com/CT/bill/HB05674/2025>; <https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2023/10/dec-to-lead-multi-agency-effort-to-investigate-bottle-bill-fraud>; <https://www.recyclingtoday.com/news/new-york-can-bottle-bill-recycling-penalty/>

ⁱⁱ

https://d12v9rtnomnebu.cloudfront.net/paychek/CRI_Press_release_on_redemption_rates_for_2023_08052_023_1.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ https://kab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Litter-Study-Summary-Report-May-2021_final_05172021.pdf

SB 342 - Bottle Deposit - MES Letter of Informati

Uploaded by: Jeff Tosi

Position: INFO



Wes Moore GOVERNOR

Aruna Miller LT. GOVERNOR

Charles Glass, Ph.D., P.E. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Information on Senate Bill 342 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Environmental Service (MES) offers the following comments on Senate Bill 342 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program.

SB 342 would establish a statewide beverage container deposit and redemption program. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) would need to stand up the program and approve a stewardship organization to run the program. The bill sets ambitious redemption goals (70% by 2030 and 90% by 2033) and recycling goals (65% by 2029 and 85% by 2032). By December 31, 2038, the goal is to return and refill at least 10% of all beverage containers in the State.

MES agrees with the objective of finding ways to reduce litter and contribute as much as possible to a more circular economy. As the only unit of state government tasked with operating environmental facilities such as composting facilities, materials recycling facilities (MRFs), and solid waste facilities, this general objective is central to MES's mission.

In 2025, the Maryland General Assembly passed, and Governor Moore signed into law, Chapter 431, Acts of 2025 (Senate Bill 901 – Environment - Packaging and Paper Products - Producer Responsibility Plans). This legislation established the framework for an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program in the State. The program is designed to create a circular economy by encouraging companies to design packaging that is more durable, reusable, and easily recyclable. The program is also designed to help fund improvements to MRFs and collection systems in Maryland with the primary objective of increasing recycling rates and decreasing contamination.

The EPR program is now in the implementation phase, and will continue to be until July 2028,

and will not fully mature until at least 2030. This implementation period allows the State sufficient time to take a "measure twice, cut once" as the EPR program is quite complex and will have far reaching impacts on many different industries. As the EPR program matures, and packaging materials become more recyclable and sustainable, the MRFs are expected to handle an increased volume of materials. The EPR program is also designed to provide counties with a source of funding to assist with the cost of collection and processing of recycled materials.

The universe of materials the EPR program will capture includes beverage containers. In our view, it would be prudent to first allow MDE to stand the EPR program up, allow it mature, collect data on beverage container recycling and reuse rates, and THEN make decisions on whether to pivot.

Moving the goalposts now, before the EPR program matures, introduces uncertainty in the processing of recycled materials. MES operates MRFs in Maryland. These facilities collect and sort recycled materials, then sell the commodities in the commodities market to offset the costs of operating MRFs (this is true in both public and private MRFs). For publicly owned MRFs, which rely on county subsidies to compensate for low or zero tipping fees, removing high-value materials such as aluminum and PET will increase operating costs and will require shifting of increasingly scarce financial resources. For privately-owned MRFs, costs to collect and tipping fees will increase on area businesses and counties that do not own MRFs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. It is our hope that you will take these comments into consideration as you deliberate on SB 342.

Contact: Jeff Tosi, Director of Government Affairs
Phone/Email: 410-729-8504 (w) | jtosi@menv.com

SB 342

Uploaded by: Jeremy Baker

Position: INFO



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

Senate Bill 342

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Informational
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Date: February 10, 2026
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers the following **LETTER OF INFORMATION** on SB 342.

Bill Summary

SB 342 would establish a Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to address the collection and redemption of certain beverage containers sold in the State. MDE would be required to oversee the program and enforce seller and distributor registration requirements and container disposal prohibitions.

Position Rationale

MDE appreciates the need to create a stronger, more resilient, and more cost-effective domestic solid waste management and recycling program for beverage containers. The Department supports the intent of the legislation to divert beverage containers from the waste stream and reduce litter, particularly plastic pollution. In order to implement this legislation effectively, MDE has the following comments and clarifications.

Establishing the Packaging and Paper Product (PPP) Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program requires a substantial allocation of MDE resources. To effectively launch the PPP EPR program without compromising existing mandates, MDE would require immediate funding and personnel. Although the program's costs are eventually reimbursed, the delayed cash flow forces the department to divert resources from current administrative obligations during the intensive startup phase. MDE suggests that a stewardship organization be established earlier in the implementation schedule, and that the Department's anticipated start up costs, including stakeholder engagement and regulation development, be covered by the stewardship organization at the program's outset. In addition to the PPP EPR law, MDE is also implementing Paint Stewardship, Food Residual Diversion, Recycling Markets, Electronics Registrations, and completing reporting related to synthetic turf, and the Maryland Recycling Act - all with limited resources.

MDE has also identified some areas in this legislation which may be in conflict with the PPP EPR law. Although under the bill beverage containers would be exempt from the PPP EPR law, there are some instances, like different producer and beverage container definitions, that may make it more difficult to determine which program a specific container or its components (i.e., caps, labels) would be regulated

under.

This program establishes a consumer facing fee. Even though there is an opportunity to redeem the fee, consumers will be paying an increased up front cost. This contrasts with the PPP EPR program, where the producers are paying for implementation, and the law ensures no new or additional consumer-facing fees are used to pay for the program (§9-2505(c)(ix)). Additionally, in instances of distribution, there is uncertainty regarding who pays the consumer fees for donations and who may collect the redemption value.

There appears to be new language in this legislation that would obligate MDE to “establish” or “designate” the program, if a stewardship organization is not established by October 1, 2027. MDE interprets this to mean it must implement the program either directly or through a third-party vendor. Because the Department currently lacks the necessary in-house expertise, it may issue a Request for Information (RFI) to identify the required infrastructure - including systems, software, and equipment - and to estimate associated costs. If MDE has to establish the program on its own, MDE anticipates the need to add 10-12 positions. MDE also anticipates that the procurement process could extend program implementation by at least two years. Additional time will also be required to ensure the stewardship organization fully understands the reporting requirements and potential conflicts associated with the PPP EPR.

MDE appreciates that the grant program would be run by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The Trust already possesses the necessary infrastructure for grant management, whereas MDE would need to build a program from the ground up. While MDE is capable of establishing its own system, the Trust’s decades of experience and institutional knowledge would ensure an effective program.

Under SB 342 the program targets a 70% redemption rate by the end of 2030. MDE warns that this goal may be difficult to reach. Benchmarks from 2024 indicate that only 40% of states with bottle bills currently achieve this rate, even with mature programs in place. The MDE expects a steep climb to meet these standards shortly after the program launches.

MDE’s discussions with other bottle-bill states reveal that fraud, especially cross-border smuggling from non-participating states, is a significant concern. Although this bill addresses fraud mitigation, doing so effectively requires substantial time, resources, and likely the involvement of the Attorney General’s Office. Furthermore, slow cash transfers have been known to disrupt redemption centers’ ability to pay out customers promptly.

MDE hopes that this information is helpful and is available for questions related to HB 460.

Contact: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations
Cell: 443-931-0937, Email: jeremy.baker@maryland.gov

FINAL SB 342_ HB 331 Maryland Beverage Container R

Uploaded by: Jordan Baucum Colbert

Position: INFO



POSITION STATEMENT

Bill: SB342/ HB331 Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Position: Informational

Date: February 10, 2026

Contact: Debra Borden, General Counsel
Jordan Baucum Colbert, Senior Government Affairs Analyst

Dear Chair Brian Feldman,

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“M-NCPPC” or the “Commission”) has not voted on this bill yet. However, staff have drafted an informational statement.

What this Bill Does. The bill aims to reduce litter in parks and waterways, helping counties meet trash-reduction requirements and improve water quality. It also anticipates lowering cleanup and waste-management costs for local governments.

This would reduce the amount of litter in our parks. "The Bottle Bill" would create a statewide bottle-deposit program that will meaningfully cut litter and boosts recycling. It also puts the responsibility on beverage producers to fund and manage the system through a stewardship organization, with strong redemption targets of 70% by 2030 and 90% by 2033.

The bill expands convenient ways for people to return containers, including reverse-vending machines and community drop-off sites. It also offers grants to help grow recycling and reuse systems, along with more public water-refill stations.

Commingled Materials in Montgomery Parks. Montgomery Parks (Parks) staff and volunteers picked up 9.4 tons of bottles from our county’s parks and waterways. Parks recycled 16,760lbs (8.38 tons) of commingled materials. Park Clean ups bags of recycling are tracked and all are bottles. 836 Bags were collected of just bottles. The universal measurement currently for clean

ups is 25lbs per bag and that estimate would be 20,900lbs. Therefore, park clean ups alone in Montgomery County would reduce by 9.4 tons and the data that we track of Co-mingled bottles would also be reduced from .38 tons.

This bill could reduce litter in our streams and rivers, helping counties meet trash-reduction requirements and improve water quality. Over time, it may also lower cleanup needs and waste-management costs for local governments.

TOMRA Testimony on SB 342 MD - 2.6.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike Noel

Position: INFO

February 2026

Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony regarding information on SB 342 “The Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program”

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mike Noel, and I am a Director of Public Affairs at TOMRA. TOMRA provides a range of technology and services for recycling and reuse systems, maximizing resource productivity and minimizing virgin resource extraction. We are known for pioneering advanced technology for the collection and sorting stages of recycling and reusing materials. We have over 50 years’ experience operating in more than 40 jurisdictions with container Recycling Refunds (RR or “bottle bills”) around the globe, including all ten U.S. states with deposit laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 342. TOMRA is commenting on an informational basis to share the principles that high-performing Recycling Refund programs share in common. Also, at the end of this document, I include answers to DRS FAQs including how Reverse Vending Machines and our CLYNK-branded bag drop service work.

Technology and Services Provided by TOMRA

TOMRA provides multiple services that empower Recycling Refunds. Those services include:



REDEMPTION TECHNOLOGY

MATERIAL RECOVERY



Bag Drop & Reverse Vending Machines



Service Support



Data Admin/ Clearing



Redemption Centers



Material Pick-Up



Material Processing



Material Brokerage

Introduction

Recycling Refunds for beverage containers were invented by the beverage industry itself. Back when most beverages came in refillable containers, the beverage industry wanted their bottles back due to the cost of the bottle itself. So they charged consumers a deposit and managed a reverse logistics operation to collect, wash and refill bottles.

As the industry shifted to one-way containers after WWII, beverage container litter became an increasing concern for the public. This sparked the advent of legislated deposit refunds and today ten U.S. states and about 40 more jurisdictions around the world use such systems to manage beverage container litter and recycling.

Deposit return systems provide two main functions:

1. **Achieving superior collection rates** – Giving waste a value by making container eligible for a cash refund, has a direct impact on the collection rates of beverage containers (and as a result litter reduction). The latest available data shows that containers in the U.S. without a deposit have an average recycling rate of 22% whereas containers with a deposit have a 66% recycling rate.¹ And in states with a flat ten-cent deposit, the average deposit container recycling rate is 82%.²
2. **Preserving the high quality of recyclable material, ensuring it is effectively recycled** – Curbside and Recycling Refund collection systems complement each other to achieve a circular economy. Since Recycling Refunds are often compared to curbside collection systems it is important to note RRs separate beverage containers by material type. This essentially eliminates contamination meaning virtually all containers collected in RRs can be recycled. Many curbside systems today have embraced “single-stream” collection where all recyclable material is mixed together in one bin. The combination of material and inevitable consumer confusion over recyclability leads to contamination. In a Recycling Refund program, since the material has retained its high quality, containers are most often recycled back into beverage containers or other food-grade quality packaging instead of “down-cycled” to another product that cannot be recycled again.

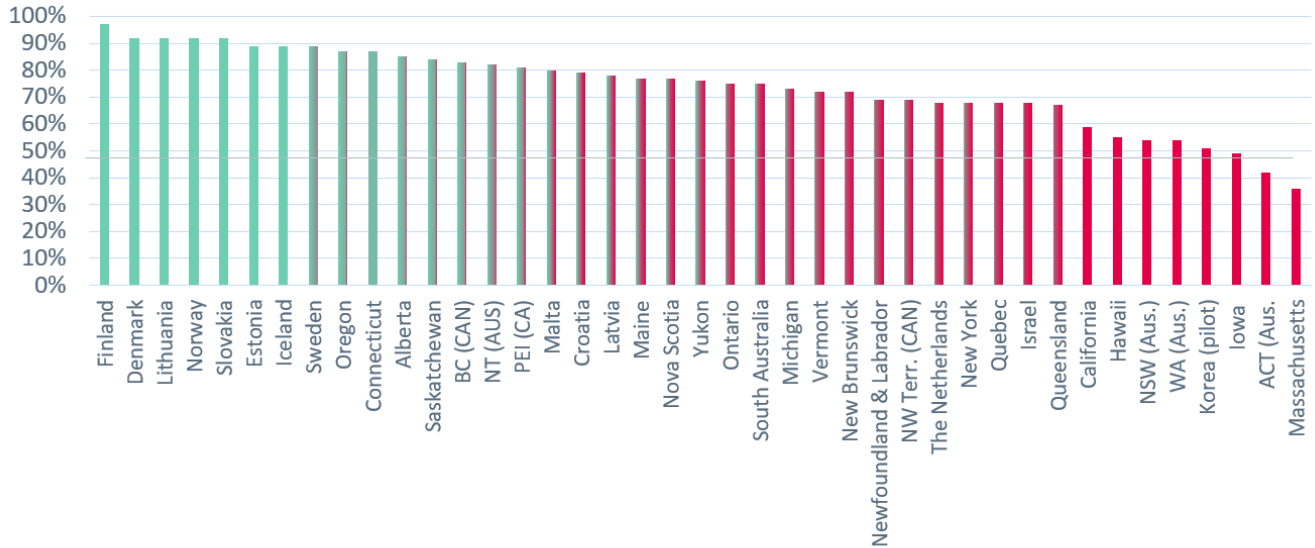
The Shared Principles of High-Performing Recycling Refund Programs

While Recycling Refunds are known for achieving 90% recycling rates or more for beverage containers, not all RRs are achieving their potential.

¹ Testimony to Connecticut Environment Committee. Container Recycling Institute, 2021. Accessible via: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/ENVdata/Tmy/2021SB-01037-R000319-Collins,%20Susan,%20President-Container%20Recycling%20Institute-TMY.PDF>

² Bottlebill.org. Refers to OR, CT, and MI.

Return Rates of Every Deposit Return System in the World (2023-25)



“Global Deposit Book 2024,” Reloop. 2024. CT is 2025 Q3 rolling four quarter average.

Since multiple states, the entire EU and about eleven more jurisdictions around the world are actively evaluating modernizing or creating their own Recycling Refund programs, TOMRA took a step back to evaluate the best practices that the high-performing refund programs in existence today share in common. By “high performing” we mean systems that achieve around 90% recycling rates for deposit containers or higher. The following can be helpful as you evaluate various proposals when designing your program.

Principles shared among high-performing Recycling Refund programs include:

- **Circularity** - A structure is in place to ensure material is collected and recycled or reused as many times as possible back into the same product or product of similar high quality.
- **Performance Targets** - Of utmost importance, the system is focused on meaningfully increasing recycling and/or reuse rates.
- **Convenient Refund** - The redemption system is easy, accessible and fair for everyone.
- **Producer Responsibility** - Producers manage the end of life of their packaging within a framework set by the government and reinvest the system’s revenue to continuously improve the system’s performance.
- **System Integrity** - The system works reliably through a mix of fraud protections, transparency, and oversight.

Conclusion

Now that there has been over 50 years of working experience with Recycling Refund programs and performance data is available, it is quite clear what works and what does not work. There is a blueprint for success when designing these types of collection programs. While any good policy will adapt to the local context, if the committee keeps the principles of Circularity, Performance, Convenience, Producer Responsibility and System Integrity in mind when designing the system, the state will adopt an effective program.

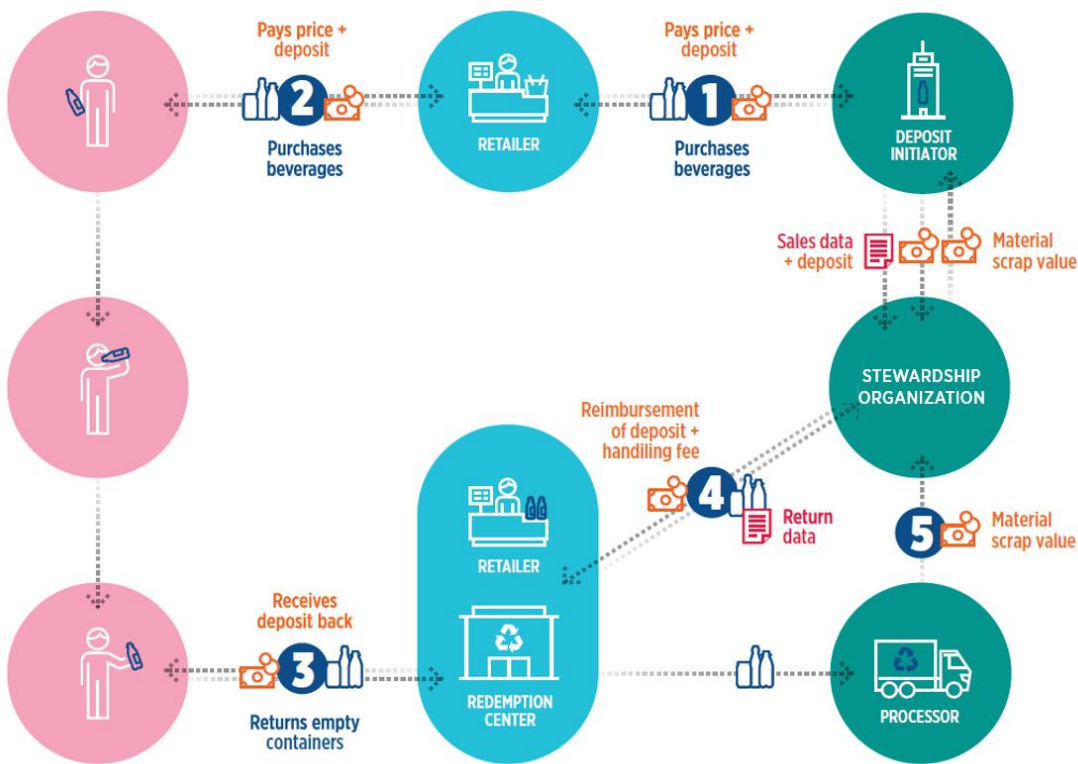
Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective. We welcome any follow-up inquiry.

Mike Noel
 Director, Public Affairs
 TOMRA
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Michael.Noel@TOMRA.com

Frequently Asked Questions regarding Recycling Refunds

How does a typical Recycling Refund program managed by a central Stewardship Organization work?

Below is a diagram of how a centralized RR works at a high level. Keep in mind, “deposit initiator” is the legal term for the business that first sells the container in the state. Typically, this is a beverage distributor or importer but can be delegated to the brand owner.



<p>1 Retailer buys container</p>	<p>Retailer buys the bottle from the ‘Deposit Initiator’ for the price of the beverage plus a deposit per container. The Deposit Initiator forwards deposits to the deposit Stewardship Organization.</p>
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2. Consumer buys container	Consumer pays for the bottle and deposit per container from the Retailer
3. Consumer returns container for full deposit refund	Consumer returns bottle to a Retailer or Redemption Center and receives their deposit money back in full.
4. Repayment to retailer or redemption center	Stewardship Organization repays the Retailer or Redemption Center the full deposit and a “handling fee” for any eligible containers redeemed. Redemption data ensures accurate accounting.
5. Container pick-up	Stewardship Organization arranges for pick-up of containers either directly or through a 3 rd party contractor.
6. Sale of recyclable commodity to initiate final recycling	Containers are sorted and prepared for market at a Processing Facility before being sold to recyclers where they are most commonly made into new beverage containers. Deposit initiators or the Stewardship Organization (depending on the law) retain the revenue from the sale of their own container material.
7. Distribution of unredeemed deposits	Deposits from containers that consumers chose not to redeem are distributed to the state, individual deposit initiators, the Stewardship Organization or shared among these entities. Each state handles this differently depending on their context, however high-performing deposit systems use the unredeemed deposits to reinvest in the refund program. Deposit initiators cover the net cost of the system based on their market share.

How does the container, deposit and handling fee exchange work at the individual retailer level?

Below is an example of how it would work at a specific retailer.

1. Joe’s Supermarket bought **10** deposit containers from the deposit initiator (beverage distributor). Joe’s Supermarket paid for the price of the containers plus a dime deposit for each container (or \$1.00 in total deposits). At this point, the store is ‘out’ \$1.
2. Then the store sells 10 deposit containers to a consumer. The consumer pays the store the price of the containers, plus \$1 in deposits. (The store is now ‘whole’).
3. Then a consumer comes and redeems **20** deposit containers. Joe’s Supermarket pays the consumer \$2 in deposits (10¢ per container). Now the store is out \$2 in deposits.
4. Joe’s Supermarket gives a report to the Stewardship Organization showing they accepted for redemption 20 of their containers. (This step is done automatically by Reverse Vending Machines or bag drop service). The Stewardship Organization picks up the containers and repays Joe’s Supermarket the \$2 in deposits and a handling fee for the 20 containers. In terms of deposits paid and repaid, the store is now ‘whole’. In addition, the store has earned revenue for providing container takeback services by way of the handling fee.

What services does a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) provide?

Modern deposit systems have embraced RVMs because they provide benefits to multiple stakeholders in the deposit system such as:

- **Reducing the cost of redemption services, particularly labor costs** – Manually accepting containers for redemption requires staff to accept containers from consumers and sort containers by size and material type, and typically by distributor and brand to ensure the appropriate deposit initiator is charged for the containers redeemed. RVMs automate this entire process, dramatically reducing the labor required. For a redemption center handling a significant level of volume this can reduce labor costs by 75%. For a retailer it can mean freeing up team members to stock shelves or better serve customers, while only occasionally maintaining RVMs.
- **Reducing the cost of container transportation** – Container compaction provides an important value within refund programs. By compacting (or crushing) containers, bottles and cans are substantially reduced in size. This saves storage space for retailers and truck space for deposit initiators. Now more containers can fit on the same number of trucks. Compaction can reduce the number of truck trips, fuel use and GHG emissions of container pickup by approximately 60%.
- **Reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of container transportation** – Given compaction reduces the number of trucks necessary to pick-up the same number of containers, RVMs also help to reduce the greenhouse gas footprint of a refund program by two-thirds compared to fully manual refund program.
- **Mitigating cross-border unauthorized redemption** – RVMs reject containers that are not registered in the system, helping to mitigate against unauthorized cross-border redemption. Compaction again serves an important service by ‘cancelling’ out the container from any repeat redemption. RVMs transmit data in near real-time which triggers ‘spike reports’ of any unusual redemption activity. System operators, distributors and regulators use this data to investigate any potentially fraudulent behavior.
- **More accurate container counts leading to more revenue for redemption providers and less ‘shrink’ for deposit initiators** – RVMs verify and count every container redeemed, designating the container as belonging to the deposit initiator who registered it in the system. If containers are not registered, they are rejected. Automated counting is more accurate than manual counting which is prone to error, so redemption providers appreciate how RVMs ensure they are paid for every container they accept. Over the course of a year, this can lead to significant revenue opportunities. In the same way, deposit initiators appreciate how RVMs accurately designate containers to each deposit initiator, ensuring one company is not paying the handling fees of another.

For these reasons, modern deposit systems have found ways to incentivize or scale the use of RVMs throughout their deposit systems. Norway and Sweden both pay a higher handling fee to redemption providers that utilize RVMs, whereas California, Maine and Quebec have made available millions in grant funding for RVMs. Connecticut took a different approach by mandating all beverage stores above 7,000 square feet to provide at least two RVMs for public use.

How does bag drop redemption (CLYNK) work?

Drop off a bag. Get paid later. That's it!

HOW BAG DROP WORKS

- 1.) **Sign up** via the app or phone call
- 2.) **Get bags & tags** at the grocery store or redemption center
- 3.) **Scan & drop your full bags** at a partner retailer or redemption center
- 4.) **Get deposits back** into your digital wallet
- 5.) **Withdraw money or donate balance** to charity



Once bags are collected from return points, each container is verified through bulk Reverse Vending Machines.

What container sizes and material types do RVMs accept?

RVMs accept aluminum, glass and plastic beverage containers. Due to their shape and weight, cartons and pouches are not handled well by commercially available RVMs and TOMRA does not recommend their inclusion in a refund program.

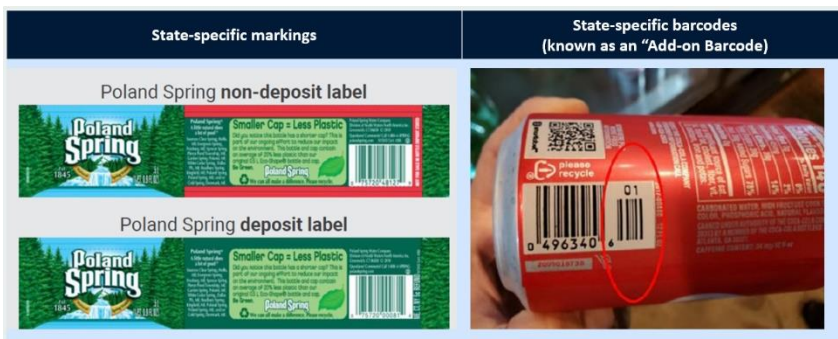
RVMs in the field accept containers that are 150ml up to and including 3 liters. Due to the odd shape of some non-carbonated beverages larger than 2.5 liters, we recommend accepting non-carbonated containers equal to 150ml and up to and including 2.5 liters. We recommend accepting carbonated beverage containers equal to 4 oz. and up to and including 3 liters. If policymakers are concerned about litter from a specific beverage category that falls outside these size specifications such as liquor miniature containers (commonly known as “nips”), we recommend excluding the other beverage categories to minimize manual redemption. For example in 2019, Maine specifically added liquor nips to the state’s deposit system. While there is not a commercially available RVM that can automatically accept these containers due to their small size, Maine redemption providers accept them manually and store them in small boxes or bags.

How do RVMs help mitigate against cross-border redemption?

Cross-border redemption is not a significant issue in the deposit systems that have prioritized addressing it. RVMs reject containers that do not match the Universal Product Code (UPC) provided by the deposit initiator when registering their product. To be effective this means that a deposit initiator applies a UPC to containers that are only sold in the designated deposit state. Therefore containers bought in another state that do not bear such a barcode cannot be redeemed via RVMs in the deposit state. For manual redemption, deposit initiators might put a visible marking to identify deposit or non-deposit containers so redemption providers can recognize non-deposit items. To be clear, this requires effort on the part of deposit initiators to adapt their labels and inventory to manage deposit containers separately from non-deposit containers. European deposit systems in particular rely on RVMs to mitigate cross-border redemption.

In practice, most RRs leave it up to deposit initiators to decide whether they will use a state-specific/unique UPC or a “universal” barcode that is utilized in multiple jurisdictions. Deposit initiators then decide whether it is worth investing in a label change and adjustments to inventory management processes. In some instances where the deposit value is very meaningful, the government has passed enabling legislation to facilitate deposit initiators to align on an industry-wide solution. For example, in Germany where the deposit value is 27 cents and therefore the unauthorized redemption risk is relatively high, Deutsche Pfandsystem GmbH (DPG) was established in 2005 by the retail, beverage producer and beverage container production industries to define and establish the organizational and judicial basis of implementing a nationwide Recycling Refund program. Part of DPG’s role includes managing system integrity such as aligning on a container security marking and related protocols. Producers ended up recommending a special security ink be applied to each deposit container.

Examples of state-specific markings and barcodes utilized in New York and Connecticut



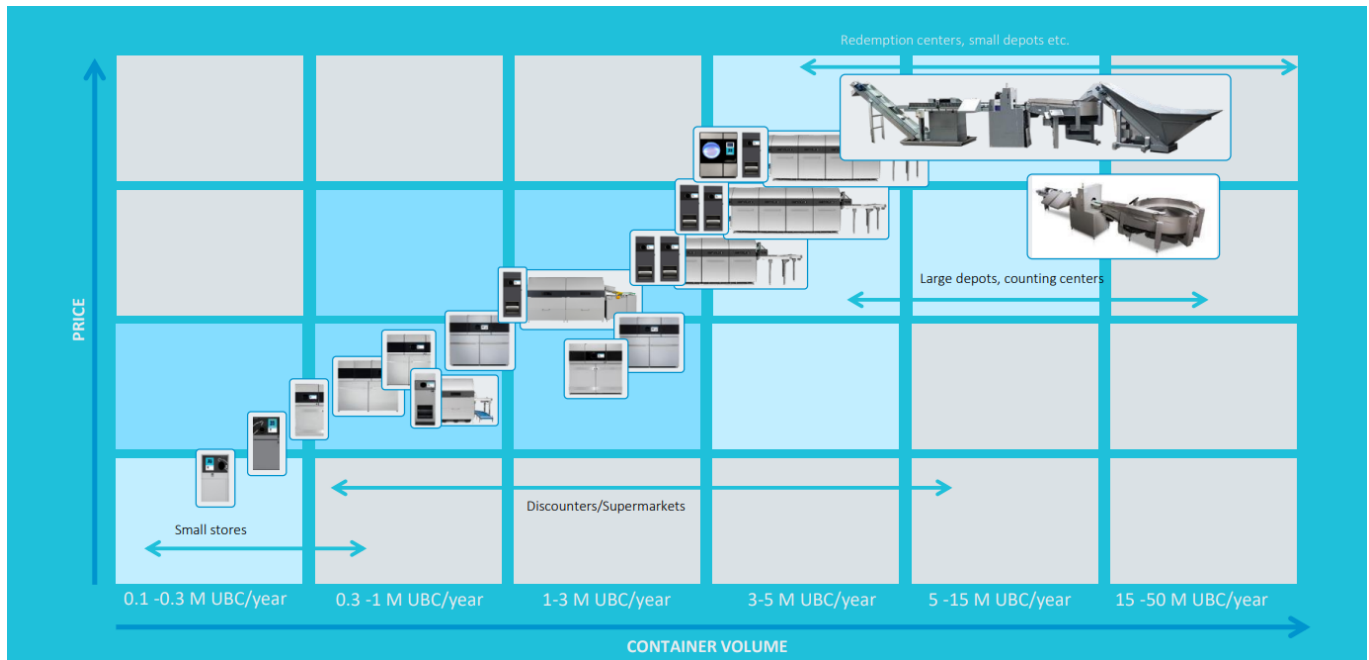
State law cannot mandate the use of state-specific barcodes due to Interstate Commerce laws, however legislation can incentivize the use of such methods through, for example, providing participating deposit initiators with a greater share of the unredeemed deposits.

What type of data does an RVM record?

RVMs record data to identify containers redeemed and match them with the deposit initiator that registered the product in the machine’s cloud database. This includes the container’s material type, shape, weight, and Universal Product Code. The machine also records when the container was redeemed, how many containers were redeemed before cashing out. Online machines also track whether the machine is operational and if not, what type of error has occurred. This enables maximum uptime where the RVM operator and retailer or redemption center partner to get the machine up and running again.

How large are Reverse Vending Machines?

There are many RVM types and styles on the market today. The appropriate solution depends on a retailer or redemption center’s needs – in particular the level of redemption volume, size of location, and priority placed on labor costs. As you can see below TOMRA offers a range of reverse vending solutions.



TOMRA's portfolio of Reverse Vending solutions extends from small to large depending on redemption volume and vendor preferences.

For small retailers, they may want one small machine that accepts all three material types. The M1 accepts aluminum, glass and plastic containers and has the following dimensions:

- H: 5.5'
- W: 3.2'
- D: 2.1'



TOMRA M1

On the other end of the spectrum, a thriving redemption center or a retailer that has embraced redemption as a service to consumers and is redeeming about 3 million units a year may opt for an R1 and T9. Together, these machines accept aluminum, glass and plastic containers (with an option to accept refillable/reusable bottles through an opening for crates) and has the dimensions below. Note that the consumer only see the portal and consumer interface of the machines below. The rest of the machine is located in a back room.

- H: 5.9' – 6.4'
- W: 6.3' (R1 = 4.3', T9 = 2')
- D: 11' (or more if additional storage requested)



TOMRA R1



Can RVMs accept multiple materials or only one material?

Individual RVMs can accept a single material or all three materials (aluminum, glass and plastic) depending on the machine model selected.

What happens to the container once a consumer places it in an RVM?

Dozens of cameras immediately analyze the item placed in the RVM's opening. The machine's recognition system evaluates the container's UPC, weight and shape against the information in the system's database in order to accept or reject the container for redemption. If it is recognized, the machine moves the container on a conveyor system to a storage bin where it is separated from other material types. Typically, the material is compacted within the machine to ensure it cannot be redeemed again and to reduce the cost and carbon emissions of container transportation. Then the RVM automatically transmits the container's redemption data to RVM system operators who initiate billing of the appropriate deposit initiator for the retailer or redemption center accepting their containers.

How are refillable/reusable containers handled in a Recycling Refund Program?

Multiple refund programs in operation today take back both one-way and refillable beverage containers, particularly in Canada and across Europe. RVMs are capable of accepting refillable containers. Typically, a consumer will return refillable containers to the store in a uniform crate and place the crate in an opening in the RVM. The RVM analyzes the bottles and accepts or rejects them for redemption. The refillable containers are then transported to central washing and cleaning facilities before being distributed to refilling facilities, all by the deposit initiator or on the deposit initiator's behalf.

Who pays for Reverse Vending Machines?

Typically the redemption provider, meaning the beverage retailer or redemption center, finances Reverse Vending Machines. The Stewardship Organization then reimburses the retailer and redemption center through a handling fee. RVMs are financed based on three methods: a) purchase (which is rare), b) monthly lease, or c) what is known as a "through-put lease". A through-put lease allows a retailer or redemption center to utilize RVMs at no or minimal upfront cost, where the RVM provider takes on the financial risk of providing the machine, as long as the retailer meets a minimal redemption volume. The retailer or redemption center pays for the machine by paying a small amount per container redeemed (e.g. 1 penny or a half penny). The handling fee helps to compensate the retailer or redemption center for the cost of such technology.

ABOUT TOMRA: TOMRA provides a range of advanced vision systems that utilize sensor-based technology to sort everything from bottles to blueberries allowing companies and consumers to reduce their waste footprint and providing a stream of clean valuable material to the ‘circular economy’.

TOMRA COLLECTION: With an installed base of approximately 83,000 systems in over 60 markets including all 10 U.S. states with deposit laws, TOMRA Reverse Vending is the world's leading provider of reverse vending, bag drop and clearinghouse solutions. Every year TOMRA facilitates the collection of more than 48 billion empty cans and bottles and provides retailers and other customers with an effective and efficient way of collecting, sorting, and processing these containers. In 2025, TOMRA acquired C&C Holdings which operates the popular CLYNK-branded bag drop redemption program in order to offer a full suite of redemption offerings and make redemption easier for everyone. TOMRA's material recovery business includes the pick-up, transportation, and processing of used beverage containers in North America, as well as the subsequent brokerage of the processed material to recyclers. The revenue stream in this business area is derived from fees received from bottlers based on the volume of containers processed. Currently, TOMRA Material Recovery processes over 340,000 metric tons of containers annually. TOMRA has over five decades of experience in markets with deposit return laws in place.

TOMRA SORTING: TOMRA Sorting creates sensor-based technologies for sorting and process analysis within the recycling, mining, food, and other industries. TOMRA Recycling is a global leader in its field and has pioneered the automation of waste sorting. Its flexible sorting systems perform an extensive range of sorting tasks and can both prepare and sort various types of metals and waste for either material recycling or energy recovery. Currently TOMRA Sorting Recycling has an installed base of close to 5,960 units across more than 40 markets.