



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

February 11, 2026

TO: The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 331 – *Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program*
Support

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 331, *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

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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 Environment and Transportation Committee give this bill a favorable report.

cc: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee