



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

KATE STEWART
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 11, 2026

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

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

RE: House Bill 331 - *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 House Bill 331 - *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 HB331 to cut down on cleanup costs and protect Maryland's environment.