



Odette Ramos

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HB331- Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Fund and Litter Reduction Program
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FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee and
Honorable Chair Valderrama and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

I am writing to urge your support of **HB 331 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 HB331.

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