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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

HB331: Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program (Maryland Bottle Bill)

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 11, 2026

SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 331 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 HB331.

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.