

February 11, 2026

**HB 331- 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 Allison Blood and I am here on behalf of the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore. I submit this testimony in favor of HB 331.

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 58 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.

In the water, Waterfront Partnership spends \$400,000 dollars annually on the operation and maintenance of our trash wheels. That includes labor, transportation costs, and tipping fees. On land, We spend 1.3 million dollars annually on cleaning, which includes 52,260 hours of labor collecting an average of 580,000 lbs of trash per year, in our waterfront district.

What I want to point out here is the significant reduction in litter and waste disposal costs that will occur with the implementation of a Bottle Bill for both the public and private sectors.

As an example, the State Highway Administration spends \$17 million annually on roadside litter clean-up. The Container Recycling Institute conducted a litter study that shows an 80% reduction in beverage container litter in states with a bottle bill vs. without, and an average of 35% reduction in overall litter. Using the SHA budget as an example, 35% less litter could save the state 6 million dollars annually in litter clean-up costs. These savings alone could fund the initial program costs, all of which will be paid back, several times over.

Waterfront Partnership would certainly rather spend that budget 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 25% 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 HB 331. 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>







Maryland Residents Support the Maryland Bottle Bill!

The undersigned Maryland Residents are writing to express my strong support of the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program ([HB331/SB342](#)), also known as the Maryland Bottle Bill.

I strongly believe that adopting this legislation will reduce the amount of litter ending up in our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. Since 2014, Mr. Trash Wheel has collected 2.6 million plastic bottles from the Baltimore Harbor. It's time to put him on a diet!

The Maryland Bottle Bill will introduce a deposit-return system for beverage containers, including plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and glass bottles. This system has been proven effective in other states at reducing litter, promoting recycling, and conserving resources. By placing a monetary deposit on beverage containers, consumers are incentivized to return them for recycling, thereby reducing waste in our streets, parks, and waterways.

Not only does the Maryland Bottle Bill have environmental benefits, but it also has economic advantages. Implementing a deposit-return system would create jobs in recycling and waste management industries, stimulate local economies, and reduce costs associated with litter cleanup and landfill disposal.

Furthermore, this legislation aligns with Maryland's commitment to environmental stewardship and Chesapeake Bay restoration. By supporting the Maryland Bottle Bill, the State would demonstrate its dedication to preserving natural resources, reducing pollution, and combating climate change.

I urge you to carefully consider the benefits of the Maryland Bottle Bill and to take decisive action to support its implementation. Let us work together to create a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future for our State and for generations to come. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to seeing Maryland continue to lead the nation in environmental innovation and waste reduction.

Signed,

[Maryland Residents]

Rache	Zubek	21223-2309	MD
Chris	Lemon		MD
Joe	Hopkins		md
Lijo	Panghat		md
Aimee	Hickman		MD
Dawn	Doherty		MD
Emily	McHenry		MD
Delia	Lynch		MD
Jason	Mah		MD
Kalil	Kelly		md
Annelise	Royles		MD
Kiersten	Miller		MD
Hope	Orjuela		MD
Michele	Robertson		MD
Ankit	Gandhi		MD
Siena	Greenwell		MD
Patrick	Wilson		MD
Megan	Delany		MD
Kyle	Shiflett	21230-3937	md
Cara	Groden		md

Michele	Berry		MD
David	Ryer		MD
Kelly	White		MD
Talley	Kovacs	21230	MD
Chloe	Santillan		MD
Rob	Bennett	21230	md
John	Pierson		MD
Amanda	Pflaumer		md
Kathryn	Carson		MD
Carolyn	Kowalski		MD
Sarah	Mikkelsen		MD
Maria	Guerra		md
Victor	Sigmund		MD
Alexandra	Graves		MD
Hannah	Knight		md
Clarissa	Madar		MD
Brian	Burns		md
Mark	Costello	21211-2477	MD
William	Zhu		MD
Michael			MD
eli	Reamer		MD

Ling	MacLean	21230-3968	MD
Greg	Wellham		MD
Michael	Newell		MD
Martha	Hartlaub		MD
Josh	Valentine		MD
Melody	Easton		MD
Craig	Bettenhausen		MD
Gideon	Singer		MD
Ryan	Langley		MD
Linda	Obradovic		md