



Office of The Mayor Celina R. Benitez

1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712 Telephone: (301) 985-6585 MountRainierMD.org

February 11, 2026

Re: Strong support of House Bill 331

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the City of Mount Rainier, I respectfully submit this testimony in **strong support of House Bill 331**, legislation establishing the **Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**. This comprehensive, statewide approach to beverage container recycling would significantly reduce litter, lower municipal cleanup costs, and improve environmental outcomes while shifting responsibility from local governments to producers.

HB 331 is especially beneficial for small, densely populated municipalities like Mount Rainier. As a compact community with limited land area, high pedestrian activity, and shared commercial corridors, Mount Rainier disproportionately bears the impacts of beverage container litter in streets, sidewalks, parks, and stormwater systems. Single-use beverage containers are among the most common forms of litter our City must address, often requiring repeated cleanups that strain local public works budgets and staff capacity. By creating a deposit-refund system and establishing clear redemption infrastructure, HB 331 would meaningfully reduce the volume of containers discarded in public spaces. The bill's emphasis on convenient redemption options, producer responsibility, and performance targets directly supports local governments' efforts to keep neighborhoods clean without imposing additional mandates or costs on municipalities. Importantly, the bill recognizes that litter reduction is not solely a local issue, but a statewide responsibility that requires upstream solutions.

The City also strongly supports HB 331's provisions allowing counties and municipalities to establish redemption facilities and receive credit toward recycling rates for containers redeemed locally. This flexibility empowers municipalities like Mount Rainier to participate in the program in ways that align with local conditions, while ensuring that residents have accessible and equitable options to redeem containers close to where they live and shop.

Finally, HB 331 advances environmental justice and equity goals by reducing pollution in communities that experience higher foot traffic and commercial activity, while lowering the long-term costs of litter management borne by local taxpayers. For Mount Rainier, this bill represents a practical, fair, and forward-looking solution that supports cleaner streets, more efficient recycling systems, and stronger partnerships between the State, local governments, and producers.

For these reasons, the City of Mount Rainier urges the Committees to issue a **favorable report on House Bill 331**. Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on environmental sustainability and local government support. Please feel free to contact me at 301.985.6585 or via email MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Celina R. Benitez

Mayor Celina Benitez, City of Mount Rainier