



Trash Free Maryland
3717 Boston St., #242
Baltimore, MD 21224

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB 92, Environment – Beverage Containers Connected with Plastic Rings – Prohibition on Sale

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 4, 2026

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Trash Free Maryland supports HB92 as amended, which would restrict without exemption the sales of beverage containers connected with plastic ring connectors¹. This legislation would eliminate a problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic at the source, thereby eliminating litter, protecting wildlife, reducing a contaminant in our recycling systems,² and preventing a source of macro- and micro-plastic pollution in Maryland’s waterways. We support this bill as amended by the sponsor to remove the exemption for “biodegradable” plastic ring connectors.

Trash Free Maryland works toward a Maryland free of trash, where lands and waterways are safe and healthy for all to enjoy. We partner with anti-litter and water protection organizations from across the state and locally to identify problematic and significant contributors to litter and to develop solutions to prevent sources of litter. This legislation aligns with our long-standing commitment to support systemic and targeted policies that eliminate litter and lead to reductions in single-use plastic.³

We also do not see an exemption for biodegradable ring carriers as a viable alternative, since biodegradable plastic rings may cause many of the same harms to our environment and wildlife. Littered ring connectors have gaps and openings that can ensnare wildlife long before the materials break down. The gaps and openings also catch on vegetation and sink to the bottom of streams, making them difficult to remove once they have escaped into the environment. And these materials break apart into smaller pieces that contribute to microplastic pollution.

¹ For simplicity we will use the term plastic ring connectors when we refer to “plastic flexible six pack rings” as well as other plastic beverage connectors such as “four-pack rings,” “snap rings,” “snap connectors,” “can carriers,” and other similar terms for plastic connectors that are not part of the single unit container and that are used to hold sealed beverage containers together for sale as one unit.

² Well-meaning consumers often add nonrecyclable items to municipal recycling collection due to a desire to recycle or confusion or belief that the item can be recycled because it is plastic or because it displays chasing arrows or a resin code. This behavior is sometimes referred to as “wishcycling.” Wishcycling items that the recycling center is not designed to handle can be problematic because those items can tangle in equipment, contaminate recycling streams, or endanger staff when they must be manually removed.

³ Prohibiting sales of beverage containers with plastic ring containers aligns with other single-use plastic policies that Trash Free Maryland has supported, such as bans on plastic carryout shopping bags, foam food packaging, and other single-use items that could be replaced with reusable or environmentally preferable alternatives. See, for example, <https://www.trashfreemaryland.org/plasticbags>.

All of these problems can be avoided by switching from single-use plastic beverage container connectors to available alternatives. Some beverage companies have already made the switch away from plastic ring connectors to non-plastic or cardboard carrying handles and packaging, demonstrating that commercially available alternatives are feasible.⁴ Canada banned these flexible six-pack rings and alternatives are in use.

Plastic ring connectors are already polluting Maryland's waters. Since the International Coastal Cleanup® (ICC) began in Maryland in 1988, more than 24 thousand volunteers (24,778) have participated in shoreline and waterway cleanups, removing over 936 thousand pounds of debris (936,606 lbs.) In that time, ICC volunteers in Maryland have collected at least 4,159 six-pack holders.⁵

We need to act now on the plastic pollution crisis. Systemic policy changes will be needed to turn the tide on plastic production and pollution. Restricting sales of beverages with plastic connectors is an effective next step in following Maryland's proud tradition of leadership and legislative action on problematic and avoidable plastic litter sources, such as our nation-leading ban on polystyrene foam food packaging and plastic microbeads.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on HB 92 as amended to remove the exemption for biodegradable plastic ring connectors.

Contact: Kelly Doordan (kelly@trashfreemaryland.org), Executive Director, Trash Free Maryland

⁴ See attachments for examples of common plastic beverage connectors and alternatives on the market.

⁵ Ocean Conservancy. "Trash Information and Data for Education and Solutions (TIDES) dataset."
Retrieved from: <https://www.coastalcleanupdata.org/>. Feb. 2026.

Attachment 1 – Trash Free Maryland HB92 Testimony

Examples of glass beverage containers connected with cardboard handles.



Canned beverage containers connected by cardboard carrier next to similar canned beverage containers connected by plastic ring connectors.

