

MATTHEW J. SCHINDLER
Legislative District 2B
Washington County

Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations and Ethics
Labor

Local Government/Bi-County Agencies
and Administration

House Study Group on Economic Stability



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 221
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3125
800-492-7122 Ext. 3125
Matthew.Schindler@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice-Chair, and honorable members of the committee for the record I am Delegate Matthew Schindler, and I am here to present House Bill 92. HB92 would prohibit the sale and distribution of plastic beverage ring connectors. I am sure you are all familiar with these rings. They are almost impossible to recycle. They cannot be reused. These plastic rings are extremely harmful to the environment due to their ability to entangle both marine and terrestrial animals, which leads to suffocation, injury, and even death. These rings become entangled on the animals' bodies, causing any movement to be extremely difficult. Escaping predators and even hunting becomes impossible tasks, with some animals even experiencing growth deformation as these rings become embedded to their bodies from an early age.

The use of these plastic rings also leads to increased microplastics within landfills, waterways, and oceans as these products take decades if not centuries to decompose. Due to this, these products will linger within environments and subsequently pollute food sources for animals and water sources used for drinking water. This can cause long-term issues for animals and humans as we do not know the full long-term impacts of microplastic ingestion on the human body. Overall, plastic rings are detrimental to wildlife, waterways, and our constituents.

Companies and small businesses are already moving to alternatives to the traditional plastic connector ring. Companies such as Coca Cola and PepsiCo are beginning to replace their plastic packaging with paper-based products. Even smaller businesses like Saltwater Brewery in Florida have developed packaging made from barley and wheat ribbons leftover from the brewing process that are 100% biodegradable and edible. There are certainly many alternatives to plastic ring connectors in the marketplace today.

We've seen the adverse effects of these plastic beverage rings since the 1960's. Companies are finally moving away from these rings, albeit slowly, as the reality is these connectors, even if manufactured as biodegradable, compostable, or photodegradable, still can last weeks, months, or years, and when they break down, just become smaller chunks of plastic.

Maryland would not be the first state to remove plastic ring connectors from the market. Maine was the first state to ban plastic ring connectors in 1989. Delaware recently passed a similar ban

in 2025. Additionally, the entire country of Canada instituted a ban on plastic beverage rings in 2023. Similarly, New York and Rhode Island have similar initiatives advocating for the ban of plastic rings. I understand from many meetings with the beverage industry, retailers, etc., that a transition period may be required to use old stock, and change packaging, which I think is completely acceptable. But it is time for Maryland to act to protect our wildlife, waterways, and citizens.

Thank you for your time, and I respectfully urge the committee for a favorable report on HB92.