

## **Support for HB 331, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am Ron Weiss, a resident of Fort Washington and the President of the Indian Head Highway Area Action Council, Inc. (IHHAAC). I submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 331.

For those of us who live, work, and travel along MD 210, litter from single-use beverage containers is a daily reality. Bottles and cans accumulate along roadway shoulders, in shopping-center parking lots, at bus stops, and in storm drains that ultimately discharge into Piscataway Creek and the Potomac River. This is not an abstract environmental issue; it directly affects the quality of our neighborhoods, our public spaces, and our waterways.

HB 331 offers a practical, evidence-based solution. Experience from other states with deposit-refund systems demonstrates substantial reductions in beverage-container litter, commonly in the range of 30 to 70 percent. Achieving similar results in Maryland would translate into visibly cleaner roadsides, parks, and community spaces for families along the MD 210 corridor.

The bill is also well-designed for corridors like ours. It requires a convenient, multi-option redemption network, including retail take-back, reverse vending machines, bag-drop programs, and dedicated redemption facilities, located where people actually purchase and consume beverages. In higher-density areas along MD 210, this will bring redemption directly to major retail nodes. In lower-density communities such as Accokeek, the inclusion of bag-drop and account-based options ensures that residents are not disadvantaged by distance or limited retail.

Equally important, HB 331 appropriately shifts responsibility from local taxpayers to beverage producers. Prince George's County and local communities currently bear significant costs for litter collection and stormwater maintenance. By requiring producers to finance and operate the redemption system, and by reimbursing retailers and redemption sites for handling, this bill will help reduce the long-term public cost of litter management.

I am also encouraged by the creation of the Beverage Container Recycling Refund Grant Program, administered through the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The ability to fund additional public water fountains and refill stations is particularly valuable for our corridor, where parks, schools, libraries, and community centers in Fort Washington and surrounding areas would benefit from greater access to clean, free drinking water.

Finally, HB 331 includes meaningful transparency and accountability provisions. The Beverage Container Stewardship Organization must publicly report on the location of redemption facilities, identify areas lacking convenient access, and document how those gaps will be addressed. This reporting framework will help ensure that communities along the MD 210 corridor, including Fort Washington, receive equitable service and that implementation is responsive to real-world conditions.

For these reasons, cleaner neighborhoods, healthier waterways, reduced local cleanup costs, and fair, convenient access to redemption, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 331.

Thank you for your consideration.