



House Bill 331

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment & Transportation and
Economic Matters Committees

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From: Dominic Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 331. This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. While well-intentioned, the program would divert high-value scrap materials from county recycling facilities and create a significant, ongoing unfunded mandate for local budgets—with only temporary fiscal assistance in return.

MACo recognizes the efforts of the sponsor and supporters to lessen the potential concerns raised by locally-managed recycling programs. Several components of the 2026 bill are added specifically to help offset these potential concerns, and counties appreciate these measures, lessening their level of concerns being raised.

Local governments have spent decades building robust curbside recycling programs. Counties rely on the sale of scrap materials collected through these programs to help offset the high costs of waste management and recycling operations. HB 331 would redirect some of the most valuable commodities—aluminum cans and plastic bottles—away from county curbside systems and into a separate redemption stream, while offering only time-limited compensation through 2031.

The legislation designates a temporary portion of program revenues through 2031 to compensate counties for documented, program-attributable net revenue losses. This provision not only acknowledges the likelihood of financial harm to local governments, but also places the administrative burden on counties to track, document, and prove those losses in order to be made whole.

Ultimately, HB 331 undermines the stability of local waste management and recycling systems. By diverting the very materials that help subsidize county recycling programs, it risks weakening existing services and confusing residents who have been encouraged to use single-stream curbside recycling. For these reasons, MACo recommends an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 331.