



Testimony: [HB0331](#): Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Hearing Date: February 11, 2026

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Terrasa

Committee: Environment and Transportation & Economic Matters

Submitting Organization: Less Plastic Please by Liz Feighner

Position: Favorable

[Less Plastic Please](#) is a Howard County based grassroots organization representing more than 200 subscribers. We also work with the [Zero Waste Team](#) of [Howard County Sierra Club](#) and are a [Beyond Plastics](#) Affiliate. **We urge support of HB0331, Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**, which would create a beverage container refundable deposit program in Maryland depending on the size of the container. The small deposit collected is refunded to the customer when the bottle is returned for recycling.

Reducing the production of plastics and creating a zero-waste economy is one of our top concerns. Less Plastic Please spearheaded campaigns with several organizations in Howard County to advocate for reducing single-use plastics through two successful bills, [Plastic Bag Fee](#) and [Plastic Reduction Law](#). We also hosted a [webinar on the Story of Plastics in 2020](#). As we highlighted during the discussion, plastic pollution is an environmental justice and public health crisis: Fracking, plastics production, litter, and disposal in landfills and by incineration harm communities of color disproportionately. We believe that social justice, racial justice and environmental justice are all part of a single, globally connected Movement for Justice.

The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction aka the “MD bottle bill” is a very sensible bill. It is an easy, low-hanging fruit solution to reduce plastic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the energy needed to produce new beverage containers. This could also be called the Back-to-the-Future bill as we easily did this before years ago and would be much better off had we gone back in time and continued bottle deposits instead of switching to single-use beverage containers.

Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter. Ten states in the U.S have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs, and Maryland’s bill is designed to improve those existing laws because the states were consulted about what improvements they would make given their experience. Approximately 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually, and three-quarters of them end up as litter, are incinerated, or are landfilled. It is estimated to achieve a 90% return rate - up from a 25% rate today.

This program would be self-funded from fees paid by producers, revenue from the sale of raw materials, unclaimed deposits, and penalties. So while the state and local counties are grappling with extremely tight

budgets, the program established by the bill would not cost the state at all and relieve the counties and ultimately the taxpayers from the burden of expensive waste/recycling costs.

This bill would provide a high rate of return for containers by creating incentives for the development of refillable and reusable containers. The performance targets for the program are:

1. A 70% beverage container redemption rate by December 31, 2030;
2. A 90% redemption rate by December 31, 2033;
3. Attainment of all convenience standards identified by the MD Department of the Environment by December 31, 2028; and
4. At least 10% of all beverage containers sold in the state are returned and refilled by December 31, 2038 as it isn't cost effective to produce reusable containers if they are not being returned in order to create a circular and zero waste economy.

The state of Maryland needs to protect our waterways and our beloved Chesapeake Bay from plastic and litter pollution and this bill will accomplish this goal.

We urge a **favorable report for HB0331**.

Submitted for [Less Plastic Please](#) by Liz Feighner
LessPlasticPleaseHoCo@gmail.com