

## **Written Testimony in Support of HB0311 – Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program**

To: Honorable Chair and Members of the Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters Committee

My name is Patricia Jackman. I am on the Green Team for the City of New Carrollton. I serve as a water quality monitor on the Anacostia River for Anacostia River Keeper and salt monitor for the Izaak Walton League. I also volunteer with the Anacostia Community Watershed Advisory Committee. I am an avid rower with the Washington Rowing School out of Bladensburg Waterfront Park. I am submitting written testimony as an individual in full support of HB0311 sponsored by Maryland Delegates Terrasa, Lehman, Behler, Boaf, Charkoudian, Ebersole, Edelson, Embry, Fair, Feldmark, Foley, Forbes, Guzzone, Healey, Hill, A. Johnson, Kaufman, Lewis, Martinez, Moreno, Palakovich Carr, Ruth, Shetty, Simmons, Solomon, Stewart, Taveras, Watson, White Holland, Williams, Wims, Wu, and Ziegler.

This bill would “Establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce the litter, pollution, and costs associated with beverage containers; prohibiting a producer from selling, offering for sale, or distributing in or importing into the State a redeemable beverage container unless the producer is registered with the Department of the Environment, pays a certain fee, and is part of a certain stewardship organization; etc.” I hope this effort by the General Assembly will be successful in 2026. Maryland desperately needs this legislation to address the litter and plastic infusion of beverage containers in our communities.

I can't express how annoying and frustrating it is to see the scores of plastic and beverage containers floating in the Anacostia River or discarded along New Carrollton's streets and Briers Creek. During annual clean-ups we collect thousands of pounds of trashed beverage containers and plastic bottles. We must take action to stop this littering. Plastic beverage containers pollute our waterways and pose a threat to wildlife and human health. They break up into small pieces and are ingested by wildlife, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Scientists estimate that humans are ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic - *weekly*.

The bill 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. This will bring redemption directly to major retail nodes. In lower-density communities, the inclusion of bag-drop and account-based options ensures that residents are not disadvantaged by distance or limited retail.

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. Ten states, covering more than 90 million people, have longstanding, successful programs. They add a small deposit to the purchase price of beverage containers that is refunded to customers when the containers are returned for recycling. When empty beverage containers can be redeemed for cash, fewer are littered or likely to remain littered. The refundable deposit is an incentive to return.

Deposit programs also dramatically increase beverage container recycling. The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is 2-3 times higher than for containers not subject to a deposit, and the impact is greater with higher deposits.

According to Maryland Sierra Club:

- **Reduction in beverage container litter and plastic pollution, and an increase in water quality.** It would capture 3.6 billion additional beverage containers annually, including 2.3 billion plastic bottles.
- **Quadrupling of Maryland's beverage container recycling rate.** The estimated recycling rate, currently only 25% of containers sold in the state, would increase to more than 90% with the Bottle Bill.
- **Increase in high quality, food-grade recycled content for new food and beverage containers.** The program would generate an additional 13,328 tons of aluminum, 47,665 tons of PET plastic, 7,847 tons of HDPE plastic, and 159,397 tons of glass to be recycled into new containers, annually.
- **Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.** By reducing the production of new cans and bottles from virgin materials, the additional recycling from this program would eliminate 231,707 metric tons of CO2 equivalent annually, the equivalent of removing the emissions of 50,371 cars.
- **Savings for taxpayers and local governments.** Beverage producers would finance the costs of collection, processing, and recycling of beverage containers currently disposed, littered, and recycled, diverting materials from landfills and incinerators, saving costs for taxpayers and local governments.
- **Investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems.** Deposits are critical for development of refillable and reusable containers. The program would launch that transition.
- **Job creation.** Recycling generated by a deposit program creates five times more jobs as landfilling or incineration.

Additionally, 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 receive equitable service and implementation.

This is a well-crafted piece of legislation - an effort spanning years of dedicated work. This legislation will ultimately become a national accomplishment. This bill will lead to cleaner neighborhoods, healthier waterways, reduced local cleanup costs, and fair, convenient access to redemption. Maryland should adopt the bill and get the program underway. I respectfully urge your full support for House Bill 331.

Thank you,  
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