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To **Del. Marc Korman, Chair, and Del. Michele Guyton, Vice Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee**

Every day, my husband and I walk about 2-3 miles around our neighborhood in the Taylorsville area of Carroll County. Part of it is through a development, but the area is what I call “semi-rural” and mostly the houses are more spread out and set back from the road. The road passes through some wooded areas, and some farmland. It’s what we love about Carroll County, and Frederick is much the same. I’m attaching photos of some of the trash we’ve picked up over the past 2 years. EVERY single day we pick up something; usually beer cans, but also liquor bottles, energy drink cans, Gatorade bottles, water bottles... Once or twice a year we drive our tractor with a cart over to Franklinville Road down the street from our neighborhood and pick up trash bags full of beverage containers and other trash. When the cans or bottles aren’t too dirty, we recycle what we can, but when they’re filled with tobacco spit or have been crushed into the mud by being run over, we put them into the trash.

I also toured the Frederick County Landfill a couple years ago, which is similar to the one in Carroll County. I was appalled to see how quickly the landfill reached capacity and that Frederick actually pays to haul their waste away most of the year. But sooner or later there will not be any place to haul it away “to”.

And the kicker was seeing that glass bottles are not really “recycled” because of their weight, since it’s not cost-effective to haul that very far. So, in Frederick, glass is crushed and used to cover up what’s dumped into the landfill.

I remember as a child returning Coke bottles to the store or the vending machine for reuse. There’s an old Coca-Cola bottling plant in Westminster, that now houses businesses. We’ve done it before, and we can do it again. Glass bottles can be reused many times. Eventually, we are going to need to move to a circular system where we are refilling and reusing beverage containers once again. The deposit program is a first step towards eventually reaching such a goal.

Plastic of course is a problem because it never goes away. Microplastics get into the water and affects fish as well as all of our health. Tiny particles of plastic are everywhere in our bodies. We just don’t know yet how many chronic diseases, including cancer, they are responsible for. I personally would prefer not to have to “wait” to take action until we know for sure we should have done something years ago. Let’s be proactive for once!

This deposit program is a small thing we can do to help with all these issues. Deposits DO increase recycling! Other states and countries around the world have demonstrated that. This program will pay for itself with registration fees and unclaimed deposits, and will reduce landfill costs as well.

Programs like this can also serve as fundraisers for scouts, church groups, school kids. Anytime someone sees a beverage container littered, there will be an incentive to pick it up!

So I beg you to give serious consideration to the Maryland Beverage Container Deposit and Litter Reduction Program legislation. You will be making our lives easier, our state more beautiful, our bodies healthier, and save money in the process. It is time to put this bill into action now.