



House Bill 99

Beverage Container Deposit Program - Establishment and Advisory Commission

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation
and Economic Matters Committees

Date: February 9, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 99. The bill would divert valuable commodities from county recycling programs, with no guarantee of fiscal assistance to those counties, and potentially confuse consumers who have been educated to take advantage of curbside and single stream recycling programs.

HB 99 would require that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) establish a statewide container deposit program by September 1, 2022. The program must have a redemption goal of 90 percent, and a minimum deposit of ten cents. The bill also creates an Advisory Committee tasked with developing the framework for the program.

The complex fiscal and operational underpinnings of a bottle deposit program could leave counties absorbing the long-term loss of key recycling revenue. Additionally, the new redemption infrastructure could upend Maryland's efforts to promote citizen acceptance of and participation in recycling efforts. Maryland has debated - and rejected - various proposals to institute container deposits over the years. Recently, the General Assembly has consistently rejected various bottle bill programs and study proposals for several years since 2011.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), only 10 states currently implement a beverage container deposit program. Delaware repealed its deposit program in 2010 when it created a statewide recycling requirement instead. Vermont is among the 10 states with a container program, but it also recently adopted a statewide recycling requirement and studied the impact the recycling program will have on its container program. California's program has faced serious fiscal issues.

HB 99 would impose an unpopular charge on consumers and undermine successful recycling efforts. The bill would divert scrap material used to subsidize county recycling programs and potentially confuse the efforts to focus residents on single stream recycling. For these reasons, MACo recommends an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 99.