



HB 99 - Beverage Container Deposit Program - Establishment and Advisory Commission
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 9, 2021
Position: Favorable

Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

I moved to Baltimore a few years ago, and the first place I visited was the Inner Harbor. I have never lived in a city with such an incredible feature before and I couldn't wait to see it (and take pictures to send to everyone I know).

One of the very first things I noticed was the massive amounts of litter floating in the bay. One of the most common litter items I saw were bottles. It turns out there is solid data to back up the prevalence of bottles in our Harbor - the [Mr. Trash Wheel](#) fleet has collected over 1.2 million bottles.

The bottles we see in our parks and waterways, littering our neighborhoods, beaches and trails are only part of the problem. Nearly 1 billion recyclable beverage containers were trashed in Maryland last summer alone. Our low container recycling rate has serious consequences for public health, climate pollution and our quality of life. Less than 25 percent of our bottles and cans are being recycled. This means more leaky landfills, dirtier air from incinerators, and more litter and litter cleanup costs.

Maryland should be leading the country in recycling and sustainable waste management, not falling behind. While the beverage companies are profiting from an increasingly single-use, throwaway society, taxpayers and local governments are left to pick up their trash, quite literally. We pay the financial and public health costs of the ever-increasing amounts of packaging they produce.

Beverage Container Deposit Programs are a proven solution

From unreliable markets to a general public distrust in our recycling system, it gets harder and harder for us to mitigate our waste with our current means of recycling. But this bill offers a proven solution to this problem. The ten states that currently have beverage container deposit programs boast recycling rates that Maryland can only dream of achieving under our current system.

This bill has bold yet absolutely achievable goals - a 90% recycling rate is entirely possible with a beverage container deposit program and other states have proven that. The difference between our current 25% recycling rate and a 90% rate will mean cleaner water, cleaner air, safer wildlife, and neighborhoods with less litter.

Maryland PIRG has spent multiple summers knocking on doors in Maryland to build support for a bottle bill, talking to tens of thousands of Marylanders who are ready for the common sense solution to our bottle waste problem.

We urge you to vote favorably on this bill.