



**HB841 – Environment – Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction –  
Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting**

**Testimony before Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**March 26, 2024**

**Position: Favorable as Amended in the House**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in support of HB841, which requires water bottle filling stations to be installed in all new construction for which a drinking fountain is required beginning October 2024, and requires a survey of water bottle purchases by state agencies in 2024 and alternatives for providing drinking water. We appreciate the leadership of Del. Ruth and her colleagues for sponsoring this important legislation.

Water bottle filling stations along with water fountains make it much easier for citizens to drink water rather than having to buy drinks, whether the drinks be water or other types of beverages. This bill provides a healthy and less expensive choice for citizens that they wouldn't as easily have without the bill.

This bill identifies the quantity of plastic water bottles purchased in a year by state agencies, and looks at alternatives to buying these bottles. Plastic water bottles are a large portion of the plastic beverage containers sold in Maryland, and in 2019, fewer than a quarter of all plastic beverage containers were actually recycled and made into new products, despite what the vast majority of consumers want or believe is happening when they drop their plastic into recycling bins. The rest is incinerated or transferred to landfills, or ends up as litter on the side of the road.

Plastic is a huge problem for the environment on so many levels, from its production as a derivative of crude oil and natural gas, to litter, to not breaking down completely for many years. This bill will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and divert waste from landfills and incinerators. It will reduce demand for plastic. The members of Indivisible Howard County support such common-sense measures to reduce waste and clean up our environment.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We respectfully urge a favorable (as amended in the House) committee report.**

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