

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Testimony on: HB0841 - Plastic Bottle Waste Reduction - Water Bottle Filling Stations and Reporting
Submitting: Dave Arndt
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 25, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0841. My name is Dave Arndt, a resident of Baltimore MD, a Climate, Environmental and Social Justice advocate, a chemical engineer, a former Product and Marketing Director for BP Solar in Frederick MD, a retiree of The National Institutes of Health. I urge you to vote favorably on HB0841.

The bill would require that a water bottle filling station be installed in new construction for which a drinking fountain is required under the current version of the international plumbing code or state or local law or regulation. Also, require the Department of the Environment to gather data and identify alternative methods for providing drinking water.

In Maryland it is estimated that only 3% of all plastic bottles are recycled. They are treated as throwaways. The other 97% of plastic bottles end up in our landfills, incinerators or dumped into the environment. I could go on and on about the negative effect of plastic water bottles, from energy use to harboring harmful chemical such as PFAS and BPAs.

Many plastic water bottle users would prefer an alternative however, many buildings don't provide any, therefore using your own bottle may not be dependable or a convenient solution.

This bill would make not only make new buildings install water fillers, it would help set the expectation that all buildings have this convenient and reliable source of water.

Furthermore, this bill requires the MDE to research and discover alternative solution to our plastic water bottle usage issue and publish the findings, thus not only raising awareness, but actively providing solutions.

We recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee for HB0841.