



# Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

HB1089 (Dels. Terrasa and Edelson)

Co-Sponsors: Dels. Love, Feldmark, Ruth, and Solomon

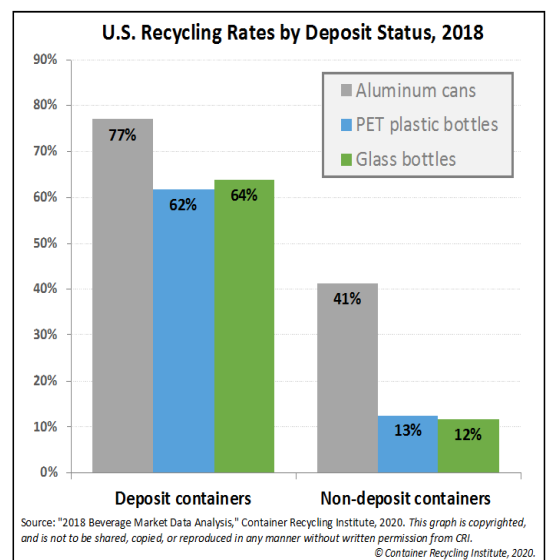
## Did You Know?

- **About 5.2 billion beverage containers are sold in Maryland annually - 863 per person.** Only 23% of them are recycled. Four billion containers a year are left in the environment—in landfills, on roadsides, in waterways—or incinerated.
- **Plastic bottles are the third most frequently littered plastic in beach cleanups.**<sup>1</sup> Beverage containers represent half of the trash by volume collected in trash traps in the Anacostia River watershed.<sup>2</sup>
- **Increasing the recycled content of beverage containers reduces greenhouse emissions and energy used in their production.** Global corporations have committed to increase the recycled content of plastic beverage containers to 25%-50%, yet recycled content in plastic bottles reached only 11.5% in 2020.<sup>3</sup> Beverage container deposit programs provide high-quality, food-grade materials for new containers.
- **Refillable glass bottles can be reused up to 50 times, and refillable PET plastic bottles up to 20 times.** A 20 percentage point increase in the market share of refillable glass and PET bottles instead of single-use PET bottles in 76 coastal countries could reduce marine plastic pollution by 39%.<sup>4</sup> Yet investments in refillables are inadequate.
- **Beverage container deposit programs are a proven, highly effective policy for recovering used beverage containers and reducing litter.** They add a small deposit, usually 5¢-10¢, to the purchase of beverage containers that is refunded to customers when the containers are returned for recycling.
- **Ten states in the U.S., covering about 90 million people, have longstanding, successful beverage container deposit programs.**<sup>5</sup> The recycling rate for deposit beverage containers is much higher than for containers not subject to a deposit (figure at right), and it increases with a higher deposit amount. Two states – Michigan and Oregon – have achieved recycling rates of 90% with a 10-cent deposit. The ten deposit states represent 17% of the population but contribute 48% of US beverage container recycling.<sup>6</sup>



Courtesy of Anacostia Watershed Society

**Support the Beverage Container Recycling Refund & Litter Reduction Program to increase beverage container recycling, conserve resources, and reduce litter, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions!**



## What will the bill do?

- It will create the **Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund Program**, with a target of at least a 90% recovery rate and 85% recycling rate for plastic, glass, and aluminum beverage containers sold in the State.
- Customers will pay a small **deposit** when they purchase beverage containers that will be refunded when they return the container to a retailer or redemption facility for recycling.
- **Retailers and redemption facilities** will be equipped with high-speed counting and sorting technology (reverse vending machines and bag drops) to expedite processing and prevent fraud, and will receive a **handling fee**.
- The program will be operated by one or more non-profit **Stewardship Organizations**, on behalf of producers selling beverage containers in the State, based on a Plan approved by the State.
- The **Maryland Department of the Environment**, with input from an **Advisory Council**, will provide oversight and enforcement.
- **Local governments** will be eligible to set up their own redemption centers and receive a handling fee for returned containers. For the first few years, they will receive a payment for any documented net losses to their waste management programs due to the program. They will also get credit for the program's returned containers in the calculation of their jurisdiction's recycling rate.
- The program will be **self-financing**, from registration fees and unclaimed deposits. A share of the unclaimed deposits will fund a **grant program** for development of refill/reuse systems, among other dedicated uses.



## What are the Program's Benefits?

- Quadrupling of Maryland's recycling rate for beverage containers to >90% of those sold
- Reduction of beverage container litter by two-thirds or more
- Reduction of the costs to taxpayers and local government of collecting, recycling, landfilling, and incinerating beverage containers
- Provision of high quality, food-grade recycled content that can be made into new food and beverage containers to meet market demand
- Improved water quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and less energy use
- Stimulation of investments in refillable and reusable beverage container systems
- Job creation and stimulation of recycling markets in Maryland

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<sup>1</sup> 5 Gyres Institute. 2017. "Better Alternatives Now, B.A.N. List 2.0."

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5522e85be4b0b65a7c78ac96/t/5acbd346562fa79982b268fc/1523307375028/5Gyres\\_BANlist2.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5522e85be4b0b65a7c78ac96/t/5acbd346562fa79982b268fc/1523307375028/5Gyres_BANlist2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Anacostia Watershed Society.

<sup>3</sup> Container Recycling Institute, calculated based on data from NAPCOR/APR. [container-recycling.org](https://container-recycling.org).

<sup>4</sup> Schroerer, Anne, Matt Littlejohn, and Henning Wilts. 2020. *Just One Word: Refillables*. Oceana. p. 1. <https://oceana.org/reports/just-one-word-refillables/>

<sup>5</sup> California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont. Redemption rates in 2019 ranged from 59% to 91%. There are currently 72 container deposit programs worldwide in 61 countries. Increased interest in the past decade has been fueled by public concern about plastic pollution. Collins, Susan. 2020. "International Embrace," *Plastics Recycling Update*, Winter, pp. 38-43.

<sup>6</sup> CRI, 2019 Beverage Market Data Analysis, © Container Recycling Institute, 2022.