

Anacostia Riverkeepers ✓ DC Environmental Network, Global Green USA ✓ Friends of Still Creek, Inc ✓ Friends of Quincy Run Watershed ✓ Greenbelt Climate Action Network ✓ Institute for Local Self-Reliance ✓ Maryland Conservation Council ✓ Maryland League of Conservation Voters ✓ League of Women Voters of Maryland ✓ Mom's Clean Air Force ✓ Patuxent Riverkeeper ✓ Prince George's Audubon Society ✓ Progressive Cheverly ✓ Rock Creek Conservancy ✓ Washington Rowing School Waste Not Carroll

Senate Bill 367 - The Maryland Redeemable Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act

Senate Finance Committee [Education, Health and Environmental Affairs]

February 18, 2016

Position: SUPPORT

The organizations listed above respectfully request a favorable report on SB 367, the Maryland Redeemable Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act, also known as "The Bottle Bill", to increase recycling and reduce litter in Maryland.

Although recycling programs have existed in Maryland for many years, only about a quarter of the 4.8 BILLION beverage containers sold in the state are recycled and reused. Over 3 BILLION are left in the environment every year -- littering our waterways, roads, and landscapes, or ending up in landfills or incinerators.

Based on the experience of ten states that have had beverage container deposit programs for decades, we are confident that placing a REFUNDABLE 5-cent deposit on beverage containers will triple their recycling rate in Maryland and dramatically reduce litter.

SB 367 will create a Maryland beverage container deposit program developed and managed by the Maryland Environmental Service, a trusted, independent, not-for-profit state agency operating across the state. MES will be able to draw on the lessons of deposit programs in other states to design and manage the best, most efficient program for Maryland.

The program will produce multiple environmental benefits:

- An additional 2-3 BILLION beverage containers removed from the environment every year, tripling the beverage container recycling rate to more than 70%
- Reduction of beverage container litter by 70-85% and overall litter by 1/3-2/3
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and conservation of energy
- Immediate progress on achieving the EPA-mandated trash Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) in the Anacostia and Patapsco Rivers
- Environmental grants to the Chesapeake Bay Trust, to counties for reaching the TMDLs, and to communities through an MDE-managed program

It will reduce costs to counties, create new jobs, and stimulate the local economy:

- Creation of an estimated 1,600 new jobs in collection of containers, recycling operations, and secondary processing of glass and PET plastic, due to increased recycling.
- Increased property values and tourism from a reduction in litter.
- Cost savings for counties and municipalities in litter removal, landfilling disposal costs, and trash and recyclable collection. In the first 3 years, funds are assured to compensate them for financial losses to curbside collection, if any. The program will conserve space in landfills and reduce the need for incineration.
- The deposit creates a disincentive to litter and an incentive for low-income residents to collect remaining beverage container litter.
- The availability of high quality recycled glass, aluminum, and plastic will stimulate local industries and facilitate higher recycled content in consumer goods.

The program will be financially sound and cost-effective.

- **It is self-financed** by unclaimed deposits and the sale of scrap materials from redeemed containers, requiring no subsidy from taxpayers.
- **It will be efficient and will reduce fraud**, using 21st century technology – “reverse vending machines” (RVMs) – at retailers to identify, redeem, sort, and crush beverage containers, conserving storage space, reducing the labor costs of redemption, and producing high-quality, uncontaminated aluminum, plastic, and glass for sale and reuse.
- **Sustainability is assured** through a Reserve Redeemable Beverage Container Recycling Fund, used only for implementation, operation, and sustainability of the program, Funds may not be transferred to the General or Special Funds of the state.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTION! Every year that we postpone adopting the program, another 3 BILLION+ beverage containers enter the environment. The legislature has considered bottle bills with different implementation configurations in the past. Each year the proposal has been updated and improved to address the issues raised.

There is no better program that can do so much so efficiently, and without resort to tax increases. The Act provides flexibility to MES to develop the best arrangements and a 3-year legislative review to fine-tune the program. Citizens from Oregon to New York, from Hawaii to Maine, have returned their cans and bottles to be recycled as a normal part of their shopping routine and collected the 5 or 10 cent deposit. We believe that Marylanders will also embrace this proven model for reducing litter and returning valuable resources for reuse.

We respectfully request the Committee to return a FAVORABLE report on SB 367!

Sincerely,

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