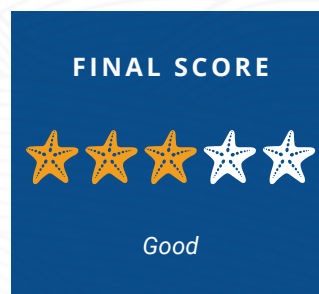
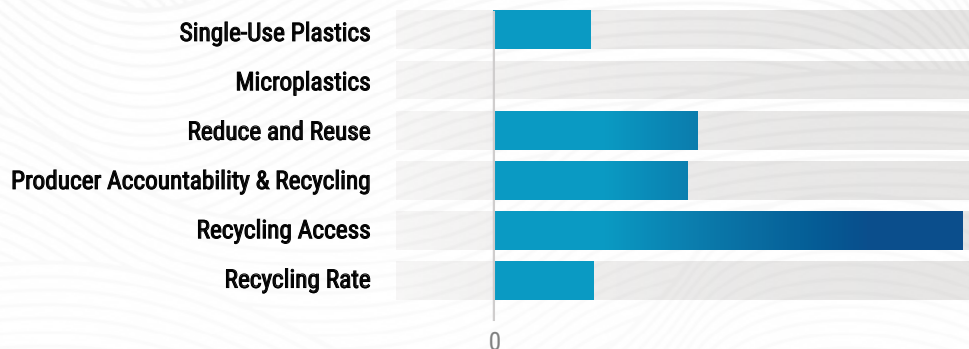


United States OF PLASTICS

Maryland

MID-ATLANTIC

Maryland is deeply connected to water, particularly through the Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the U.S., which is critical to the state's environment, culture and economy. Coastal communities along the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic coast depend on the health of marine ecosystems for tourism and protection from storm surges. The Chesapeake Bay supports a diverse array of wildlife including blue crabs, oysters and migratory birds and produces roughly 500 million pounds of seafood each year.¹ Maryland has been an early leader in addressing plastic pollution, but many opportunities remain for continued action.



¹ ["Chesapeake Bay."](#) NOAA Fisheries. Accessed May 2025.



Single-Use Plastics

Maryland has phased out expanded polystyrene foodware.² Ocean Conservancy research found a 65% reduction in plastic foam foodware pollution collected by International Coastal Cleanup® volunteers from beaches and waterways in Maryland after its phase-out in the state.³



Microplastics

The state has not passed any laws to address microplastic pollution.



Reduce and Reuse

Maryland's extended producer responsibility (EPR) law for packaging requires producers, with approval by the state, to develop targets for waste reduction and reuse through the development of their plan.⁴ Maryland has also passed a law to require any new construction with a drinking fountain to also have a water bottle filling station.⁵



Producer Accountability and Recycling

In 2025, Maryland became the sixth state to pass a law establishing EPR for packaging.⁶ This followed the completion of a statewide needs assessment required by a previously enacted law.⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maryland's recently passed EPR law has the potential to reduce single-use plastics, improve reuse systems and increase recycling. The state should work to ensure robust and timely implementation of the law to realize its full environmental and economic benefits.
- Given the amount of beverage container-related pollution in the top ten most commonly collected items in the state, Maryland could consider complementing their existing EPR law for packaging with a deposit return system (or bottle bill), which is known to immediately and significantly decrease beverage container pollution as well as overall litter.
- Given the increasing detection of microplastics in seafood⁸ and the importance of fisheries to the state's economy, Maryland could consider policies to address microplastic pollution such as requiring filters for new washing machines to reduce microfiber pollution and safeguard its seafood industry.

Top 10 Items Collected by ICC Volunteers

- 1 Beverage Bottles (Plastic)
- 2 Cigarette Butts
- 3 Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.)
- 4 Bottle Caps (Plastic)
- 5 Beverage Cans
- 6 Straws, Stirrers
- 7 Beverage Bottles (Glass)
- 8 Grocery Bags (Plastic)
- 9 Cups & Plates (Plastic)
- 10 Other Plastic Bags

² Md. Code Ann., Envir. §§ 9-2201 et seq.
³ Banigan, C., et al. "Impact of Plastic Foam Bans on Pollution." (2023). Ocean Conservancy.
⁴ SB 901, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Md. 2025).
⁵ SB 96/HB 277, 2025 Reg. Sess. (Md. 2025).
⁶ SB 901 (Md. 2025).
⁷ SB 222, 2023 Reg. Sess. (Md. 2023).
⁸ Smith, M., et al. (2018). *Current Environmental Health Reports*.