



*December 16, 2019*

Committee on Transportation and the Environment  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 108  
Washington, D.C. 20004

**Re: In Support of Glass Recycling for On-Premise Sales of Alcoholic Glass Beverage Containers**

On behalf of the Glass Packaging Institute (GPI) and our member companies, I **offer the following testimony in strong support of Section 104, subsection (a-1)** of the Zero Waste Omnibus Amendment Act, which would require the separate storage, collection and recycling of all glass containers containing alcoholic beverages, sold on-premise at bars and restaurants in the District of Columbia.

**Background**

GPI is the North American trade association for the glass container manufacturers, glass recyclers, and suppliers of materials, equipment and transport to the industry. The US glass container manufacturing industry produces the vast majority of glass bottles and jars for food and beverages purchased in grocery stores and retail outlets. Collectively, the industry directly employs 18,000 Americans in glass container manufacturing and related recycling operations throughout the country.

**Environmental Benefits of Recycled Glass**

Recycled glass remains a critical manufacturing input in the production of glass bottles and jars. For every 10 percent of recycled glass used to make a new glass bottle or jar, energy use at the plant can be reduced by 2 to 3 percent.

This is possible because recycled glass lowers the overall melt temperature of the raw materials batch. By reducing the plant's furnace temperature, associated greenhouse gas emissions are also reduced anywhere from 6-8%, for every 10 percent of recycled glass used. Considering that glass container furnaces have the ability to operate and produce new bottles and jars using up to 95% recycled glass, significant energy and air emissions reductions are achievable.

Through September of 2019, the average glass recycled content of a bottle or jar nationwide is 32%, up slightly from 2018. This equates to over 2 million tons of recycled glass purchased annually by the industry, and demonstrates the desire

and continued demand for quality, separated recycled glass by the glass container companies.

### **On-Premise Bar and Restaurant Glass Recycling for the District of Columbia**

While a small provision in the District's overall Zero Waste Amendment Act, the glass recycling requirement for bars and restaurants is well crafted.

By requiring the glass to be collected separately for recycling, and for its delivery to a glass recycling facility, the District ensures higher-value end markets for the collected glass. Glass, like nearly all recyclables collected, experiences an increase in value (along with the ability to meet manufacturing specifications, and to travel to further end markets), when the need to sort from trash and other recyclables is reduced.

By separating glass from other solid waste and non-recyclables, an opportunity also exist to reduce solid waste collection and disposal costs for bars and restaurants.

The mid-Atlantic region continues to host a strong demand for quality, separated recycled glass. There are several glass container end-markets destinations in Virginia and North Carolina.

As demonstrated by a collective of municipalities in Northern Virginia over the past year, dedicated and separate glass recycling collection provides the ability for its use in new bottles, jars and other applications.

There is also a statewide precedent for on-premise bar and restaurant glass container recycling. In 2008, the North Carolina legislature approved legislation that required nearly all of the state's bars and restaurants (ABC permit holders) to recycle bottles served on premise. These containers are collected for recycling, turned into new bottles and jars, and have increased the recycling and recovery rate of glass statewide. Given the density of many bars and restaurants within the District, there is likely to be greater collection efficiency with a similar program in place.

### **Consumers Want Options Recycle Their Glass Bottles and Jars**

Americans have expressed a clear desire to recycle glass, and the District's initiative will assist in meeting their expectations.

A national 2017 survey conducted by SurveyUSA showed:

- 95% who live in a community which recycles glass say glass should continue to be collected by recyclers.
- 91% say that recycling is an important part of conserving natural resources.
- 90% say that it is important to recycle materials rather than sending them

for landfill disposal.

A 2017 survey commissioned by the Glass Recycling Coalition found a similar desire expressed by respondents, recognizing the value of recycling glass, and a desire for continued access to glass recycling in their communities. An on-premise bar and restaurant glass recycling requirement is in line with these expectations.

We would like to express our sincere thanks for this provision. If approved, GPI and its member companies are both willing and able to support this initiative.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, or to follow up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott DeFife". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott DeFife  
President