

Bottle Bill Walk begins in Maryland

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

ANNAPOLIS — As Marylanders launched a Bottle Bill Walk across the state this week, legislation requiring mandatory deposits for throwaway beverage containers was making news in both New York and Pennsylvania.

In Maryland, one group of environmentalists left the West Virginia state line on Wednesday headed for Annapolis. A second group leaves Ocean City on Sept. 23 for the state capital and a joint rally on October 1.

In New York, a returnable container law went into effect on Monday. With annual sales of 7 billion containers a year, New York by far has been the largest container state among the nine with a mandatory five-cent deposit thus far.

And in Pennsylvania where legislation has been introduced, momentum is reported to be building in favor of the proposed law for the Commonwealth. A number of legislators, particularly from rural areas, report the bottle bill is uppermost in the minds of many constituents. And backing by organized farm groups is increasing, too.

The Maryland Bottle Bill Walk is being sponsored by Citizens Against Waste, a coalition of environmental groups established to push for a bottle deposit law.

As has happened in all states, the Maryland coalition is bucking the powerful anti-bottle bill lobby, which includes beverage manufacturers, the glass and can industries, store chains and even organized labor in these industries.

This lobby group claims that the bottle bills have cost jobs, increase

prices and sales decline.

For example, the Brewers Association and the Can Manufacturers Institute say the New York law will cost consumers \$400 million a year in higher prices for beverages.

But concerning jobs, Vermont reports about 500 new jobs have been created — mostly at redemption centers — because of the redemption law in effect since 1973.

Michigan's bottle bill, which began in 1978, has created some 4,600 jobs, according to the Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

Bills are scheduled to be considered in New Jersey and Rhode Island, which have laws before their legislators; and in Florida, South Carolina, Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., which plan to introduce legislation in January.

In addition, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and New Mexico are considering laws.

Four Western states threw out efforts last November, including California, Colorado, Arizona and Washington.

Here in Pennsylvania, both backers of a bottle bill and opponents will be active again.

Pennsylvania Farmers Association reports it kicked off an all-out anti-litter campaign at Ag Progress Days.

Nearly 600 signatures were collected on petitions supporting bottle bills that have been introduced — H.B. 1341 and S.B. 463.

Sample letters to be sent to individual state legislators were also signed or distributed at Ag

Progress.

FFA has also called on its county units to get busy in support of the bills and secure as many signatures as possible during the

next two months. The goal is to have the petitions ready for the General Assembly when it takes up the bills in November or December.

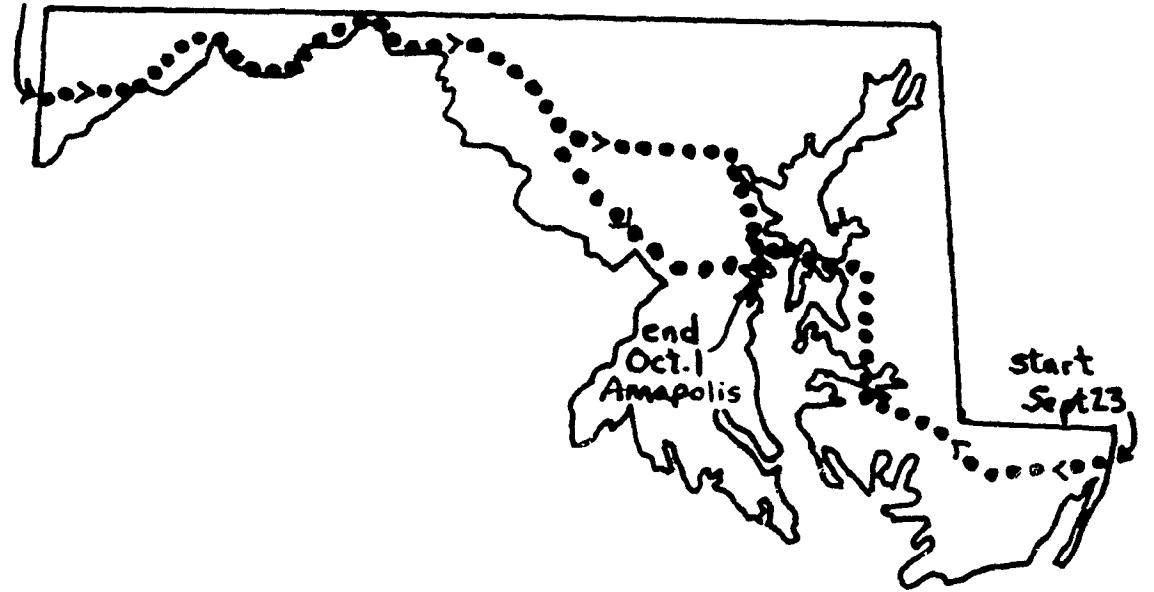
Petitions will be available at annual county farmer association meetings or door-to-door canvassing drives will be held.

Citizens Against Waste

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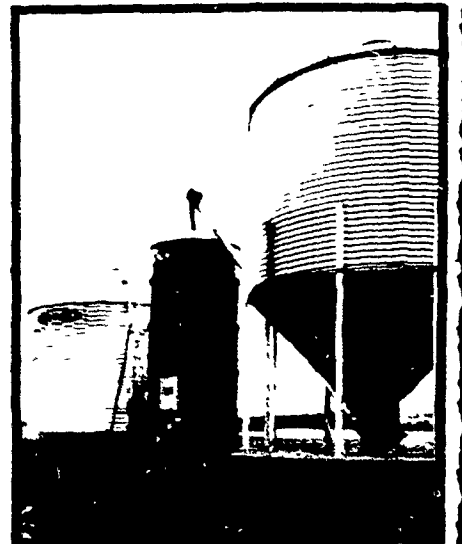
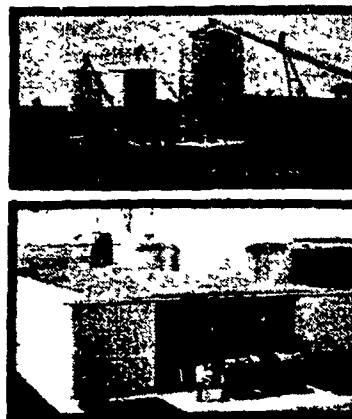
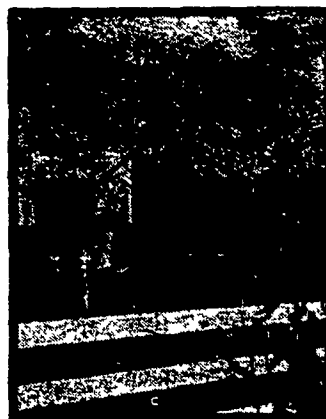
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