



BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

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**HB 987**

**To:** Members of the House Economic Matters Committee & House Environment and Transportation Committee

**From:** Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

**Re:** HOUSE BILL 987 – ENVIRONMENT – RECYCLING - HOTELS

Chairman Davis, Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Dumais, Vice-Chair Stein and Members of the Committees, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration **supports** House Bill 987.

House Bill 987 would require an owner, an operator, or a manager of a hotel to provide recycling for the guests of the hotel and recycle certain materials on or before October 1, 2021. The bill would require the recycling to be carried out in accordance with the recycling plan required for the county in which the hotel is located. In addition, the bill would authorize a county to require an owner, an operator, or a manager of a hotel to report information to the county in a manner determined by the county. Enforcement, inspection and penalties collected under the bill would be paid to the county, municipality, or other local government that brought the enforcement action.

Mandatory recycling in hotels is another step forward in encouraging recycling and sustainability in Maryland. State law already requires recycling in multi-family dwellings of 10 or more units, and in office buildings of a certain size. It also requires recycling at special events. The more opportunities that residents and visitors have to recycle both at home and away from home, the more their recycling habits and commitment to recycling will grow.

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785  
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136  
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov/>*



Many jurisdictions, including Baltimore City, currently face difficulty in reaching the State-mandated recycling goals, set by the Maryland Recycling Act. This change to the law would assist with that problem as well as meeting the State's overall recycling goals. Although House Bill 987 emphasizes that a county or municipality would decide how hotels recycle and the enforcement procedures, the City is committed to a cleaner, greener Baltimore.

Maryland thrives off tourism and this legislation would help support that. Baltimore City has a flourishing hospitality economy. According to the Visit Baltimore Annual Report there were 348,955 hotel room night visits in Baltimore for FY 2-19-2020. Visitors come to enjoy the professional sports teams, sight-see, visit the renowned hospitals, attend conferences, and more. By not having the opportunity to recycle in their hotel rooms, visitors may feel like Baltimore is not an environmentally-friendly city. This could be detrimental to the reputation of urban centers across Maryland since environmentally conscious cities have become an important brand in the global economy.

The fiscal impact on municipalities is expected to be minimal, since hotels typically use private haulers and private disposal facilities. In order to increase recycling rates, support Maryland's reputation as an environmentally-friendly state, and to improve the experience of visitors to hotels in the state, Baltimore City supports legislation to encourage hotels to recycle, which will help the City reach its recycling goals.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 987.