

CLARENCE K. LAM, M.D., M.P.H.
Legislative District 12
Baltimore and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee

Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness

Chair

Joint Committee on Fair Practices and
State Personnel Oversight

Chair

Howard County Senate Delegation



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 420
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3653 · 301-858-3653
800-492-7122 Ext. 3653
Clarence.Lam@senate.state.md.us

Support SB 28: Solid Waste Management - Prohibition on Release of a Balloon Into the Atmosphere

What SB 28 will do:

- Ban intentional releases of balloons into the atmosphere and the organization of balloon releases
- Establish civil penalties not to exceed \$250.00 for each violation
- Department of the Environment is responsible for enforcement but may delegate enforcement authority to units of counties, cities or other local governments
- Requires reporting of violations to MDE

Why legislation to ban intentional balloon releases is needed:

- To protect our wildlife --
 - Research suggests that balloons are the number 1 marine debris risk of mortality for seabirds
 - The Sea Turtle Foundation estimated in 2011 that 100,000 marine mammals and turtles and 1 million seabirds die every year from ingesting or becoming entangled in marine debris, including indigestible plastic that blocks stomachs.
 - Last May, an Assateague pony was found with a balloon ribbon dangling from her mouth; but fortunately did not die
- To protect our waterways and environment
 - Balloon waste from releases often end up in farms and waterways, harming the environment
 - Foil and latex take years to decay, if at all

What SB 28 does not ban:

- Unintentional or negligent releases
- Balloons used in research at institutions of higher education
- Balloons released by the State or under contract to the State
- A hot air balloon recovered after launch