

**TESTIMONY BY RICHARD KELLER ON BEHALF OF THE
MARYLAND RECYCLING NETWORK
SUPPORT
HOUSE BILL 1452 “DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT – OFFICE
OF RECYCLING - RECYCLING MARKET DEVELOPMENT”**

The Maryland Recycling Network (MRN) promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 “R’s”) of materials otherwise destined for disposal and the purchase of products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

House Bill 1452, introduced by Environment and Transportation Committee Vice Chair Dana Stein, would create a recycling market development program led by the Department of the Environment. The Department would coordinate the program with the Departments of Commerce, General Services, and Transportation, the Maryland Environmental Service, the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, local governments and private organizations. This bill is fully consistent with the Maryland Recycling Network’s goals described above and MRN is a strong supporter of this bill.

Recycling’s success depends on stable, long-term markets for materials. Recycling does not occur until a manufacturer uses recyclable material to make a new product and someone uses that recycled content product. Until this happens, the recycling process is incomplete and the recyclable material collected will still need disposal.

Events in China over the last few years to limit its imports of recyclables and to establish new, more stringent requirements for lower contamination rates (especially for paper and plastics) has highlighted the need for legislation to create new markets and strengthen existing markets for recyclables. China’s policies have not only limited overall markets but caused a significant decrease in prices that Maryland counties and businesses receive for their recycled materials. States such as California, Michigan, Washington, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and South Carolina have existing market development programs. These programs have resulted in expanding recycling manufacturing capacity and creating new jobs.

House Bill 1452 would encourage Maryland businesses to use recyclable materials and expand current state efforts to encourage state agencies to become an important end market for materials by purchasing and using recycled products. These efforts would make Maryland a leader not only in the nation, but a leader for the private sector as well.

The bill would establish the Department of the Environment as the lead agency for this effort and encourage cooperation with other departments and organizations on expanding markets for recycled materials and recycled products. The bill would require MDE to evaluate current markets, make recommendations to improve markets, target markets that need market development, encourage existing businesses to use more recycled materials, examine funding mechanisms, provide administrative support, develop an advertising campaign to attract new

recycling businesses, and provide technical support. The goal of the bill is to let the private sector know that “Maryland is Open for Recycling Business.”

MRN is proposing an amendment to the bill that would require the annual report identified in Section 9-1702.1 (B) to include timely data (i.e., information from the current year) and specify substantive, concrete action in the following year.

Simply collecting more materials will not move the needle on recycling rates. Only a coordinated, demand (market) driven effort will increase the level of recycling in the state and keep materials out of our landfills and from going to other disposal options. We need to get more businesses to use recyclable materials and attract new businesses to use such materials. Maryland needs to build on our buy recycled efforts (where we have been a national leader since 1977) to buy and use more recycled products. These programs will help extend our landfill life for future generations, limit incinerating solid waste, reduce using new raw materials, reduce energy use and lower generation of greenhouse gases. The state should make market development a centerpiece of our state efforts to increase recycling.

The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact Peter Houstle, Executive Director, via email phoungle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

We look forward to working with you to continue the strides we have all made to improve Maryland’s recycling programs in a time- and cost-effective manner.