



Bill: SB 222

Date: February 9, 2023

Position: Support

SB 222 - Environment - Reducing Packaging Materials - Producer Responsibility Support

Dear Chairperson Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

We enthusiastically support SB 222. Packaging makes up 28% of our waste stream. Of that, 40% is plastic, much of which is used for minutes and lasts for centuries. Currently, taxpayers pay for all of the handling, processing and disposal of the resulting waste and recycling streams.

This bill adopts a modern approach to **reduce** packaging, the very important first of the “Three Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.” The bill creates the framework to set up a program to shift recycling costs from taxpayers to producers, who actually design the packaging. The framework includes a process for producers to set up incentive systems to reward the packaging lowest in volume and highest in recyclability. As the designers of packaging, producers are best positioned to make these decisions. The Bill includes public oversight and transparency for that process.

The revenue generated by the incentive system is used to reimburse counties for 50% of their costs for recycling packaging. Currently, counties pay the full financial cost of collection, sorting and resale of packaging. Significantly, the Bill also funds new recycling infrastructure.

Maryland has producer responsibility programs in place for products now – tires and electronics for example. Producer responsibility programs for packaging have long been in place in Canada and Europe. Colorado, Maine, Oregon and California have adopted this approach and a number of states are, like you, considering it this year. Industry trade editorials now often refer to producer responsibility as an idea whose time has come.

Marylanders take great pride in our recycling efforts and are fed up with trash. Reducing packaging and increasing its recyclability will improve the system for managing packaging in a way that is market driven. We respectfully urge your favorable consideration. ¹²

Contact: Shari Wilson, Trash Free Maryland (shari@trashfreemaryland.org)

Anacostia Riverkeeper

Severn River Association

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

The National Aquarium

Environment Maryland

Trash Free Maryland

Little Falls Watershed Alliance

Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore

Maryland Public Interest Research Group

Mom's Organic Markets

Mr. Trash Wheel

Rock Creek Conservancy

¹ Containers and packaging make up a major portion of municipal solid waste (MSW), amounting to 82.2 million tons of generation in 2018 (28.1 percent of total generation). Packaging is the product used to wrap or protect goods, including food, beverages, medications and cosmetic products. <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/containers-and-packaging-product-specific>

² Global plastic waste generation more than doubled from 2000 to 2019 to 353 million tonnes. Nearly two-thirds of plastic waste comes from plastics with lifetimes of under five years, with 40% coming from packaging, 12% from consumer goods and 11% from clothing and textiles. <https://www.oecd.org/environment/plastic-pollution-is-growing-relentlessly-as-waste-management-and-recycling-fall-short.htm>