



Committee: Education, Health, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB0222 - Environment - Reducing Packaging Materials -
Producer Responsibility
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 9, 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB222. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB222.

SB222 requires the Department of the Environment (MDE) to conduct a statewide recycling needs assessment every 10 years, and requires that by April 1, 2026, producers of packaging materials submit a producer responsibility plan to MDE for approval, otherwise they are prohibited from selling or distributing the packaging.

SB222 aims to improve the reduction, reuse, composting, and recycling of packaging materials, as well as improve recycling markets. The bill also addresses the cost to local governments associated with transporting, collecting, and processing packaging materials by requiring producers to reimburse local governments for those costs.

Containers and packaging constitute a substantial share of the municipal solid waste generated in the U.S. (28.1% in 2018). Recycling rates vary from a high of 81% for paper and cardboard packaging to a low of 14% for plastic. Some plastic packaging is not currently designed to be recyclable. Plastic film, for example, is a big problem as it fouls recycling equipment, contaminates recycled materials, and lacks a recycled materials market.

SB222 appropriately incentivizes producers of packaging materials to take responsibility for the waste they generate, including by reducing packaging overall, recycling or reusing it after it is used, and compensating local governments for the cost of handling packaging waste.

We support the approach in SB 222, which sets up an ambitious program to reduce waste and recycle more, while also holding packaging producers responsible for they generate. For these reasons, we support SB222 and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.