

# MARYLAND RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

*The Voice of Retailing in Maryland*



## **SB222 Environment - Reducing Packaging Materials - Producer Responsibility** **Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee**

**February 9, 2023**

**Position:** Informational

**Background:** SB222 would establish a packaging producer responsibility program in Maryland.

**Comments:** The Maryland Retailers Association (MRA) is not unsupportive of a statewide approach to address issues with our waste stream and the effects of climate change. We strongly support a comprehensive, informed, and fact-based approach to correct problems with the waste stream and recycling infrastructure in Maryland. To that end, MRA has testified favorably on a variety of bills in recent years that proposed studies and task forces to review recycling and waste policies and systems in the state.

MRA believes that a truly comprehensive, wholistic approach is necessary to adequately address concerns about waste, contaminated recycling streams, and the effects of climate change. Bans on individual products, restrictions on the use of certain materials or labels at certain times, as-yet unstudied programs, and a lack of preemption will result in a patchwork of overlapping policies, conflicting standards and requirements, and interstate commerce issues. Increased recyclability and waste diversion goals must be accompanied by robust infrastructure to process every facet of the waste stream.

SB222 includes requirements to conduct regular statewide recycling needs assessments after the extended producer responsibility program has already been mandated. Regular studies will positively impact the effectiveness of the program over time; however, these assessments should begin before a policy is crafted, not after. Constructing a packing responsibility policy without a full understanding of the needs and capabilities of the State's infrastructure runs the risk of implementing an inadequate program that falls short of statewide needs and conflicts with existing State and local approaches, not to mention goals that have already been set independently by industry stakeholders. MRA would support the legislature in conducting an initial needs assessment and then returning to carefully craft a comprehensive, collaborative, and data-driven statewide policy package plan with stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration.