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MAYOR

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HB0168

February 7, 2024

TO: Members of the Environment & Transportation and Economic Matters Committees
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 168 – Environment – Plastic Products – Postconsumer Recycled Content Program
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chairs Korman and Wilson, Vice Chairs Boyce and Crosby, and Members of the Committees, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 168.

HB 168 prohibits certain producers of certain plastic products from selling, offering for sale, or distributing the products of any person in the State, unless certain circumstances are met; requiring certain producers of certain plastic products to, individually or as part of a representative organization, register to pay a certain fee annually to the Department of the Environment; establish certain minimum postconsumer recycled content percentage requirements for certain plastic beverage containers and rigid plastic containers; authorizes the Department to offer a waiver under certain circumstances, etc.

HB 168 aligns with Baltimore City's strategies for waste reduction outlined in the Less Waste, Batter Baltimore (LWBB) operational plan. LWBB includes recommendations for mandated recycle content laws as well as product takeback programs, extended producer responsibility mandates, and disposal bans or surcharge fees, to list a few. Baltimore City recognizes that the requirement in this bill for recycled content in plastic products is part of a larger need to change the legislative landscape around waste management in Maryland.

This bill will achieve the greatest benefit when combined with improvements in infrastructure and support staff levels for recycling collections and processing, in order to manage the increase in demand for recycled materials.

The Recycling Partnership has projected an increase in demand for post-consumer recycled content (PCR) in plastic packaging. A Recycling Partnership analysis, focusing on the prominent resin polyethylene terephthalate (PET), shows that there is an annual gap of more than 1 billion pounds between the current U.S. supply and projected 2025 demand for recycled polyethylene terephthalate (RPET) for use in bottles. As a result, companies with significant dependence on U.S. RPET supply are destined to face challenges in meeting their recycled contact targets unless strategic investments are made to address widespread national infrastructure gaps.

For the above stated reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 168.

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