



## **HB168 –Environment – Plastic Products – Postconsumer Recycled Content Program**

### **Testimony before House Environment & Transportation Committee February 7, 2024**

#### **Position: Favorable**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB168**, Environment – Plastic Products – Postconsumer Recycled Content Program. We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Terrasa for sponsoring this important legislation.

The bill requires producers selling plastic containers in Maryland to increase postconsumer recycled (PCR) content of a variety of plastic containers to certain percentages by particular dates. Producers would be required to register with the Maryland Department of the Environment, pay an annual registration fee calculated to fully fund the cost of administering the program, and report the PCR content of their container brands every year. Third-party certification of the PCR content would be required and there would be penalties for falling short of the target. The program would be evaluated five years after it is launched.

Of all the plastic beverage containers sold in Maryland in 2019, fewer than a quarter were actually recycled and made into new products, despite what the vast majority of consumers want or believe is happening when they drop their plastic into recycling bins. The rest is incinerated or transferred to landfills.

Producers prefer using new plastic because it is cheaper, but their cost does not take into account the external cost to the environment. This bill reduces the amount of new plastic used, which in turn will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and divert waste from landfills and incinerators. It will generate demand for recycled plastic which will stimulate the recycled plastic market and create new jobs.

Ultimately, bills like this will force businesses to consider the environmental damage of their plastic usage practices and force them to innovate and develop cost-effective alternatives to virgin plastic. The bill is a step towards reducing the harm plastic does to our environment.

For all of these reasons, we urge you to pass the Postconsumer Recycled Content Program bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. **We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.**

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