

# COCKEY'S ENTERPRISES, INC.

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The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
Environment and Transportation  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 28, 2024

**RE:** In Opposition to House Bill 163 and HB 1318

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Cockey's Enterprises, Inc. is a family operated business that has provided reliable waste-removal services throughout the Baltimore community since 1947. The company is opposed to the above referenced bills, which would establish an On-Farm Organic Diversion and Composting Grant Program. This proposal will not only increase business costs for companies like ours; it will also make it more difficult for us to anticipate and plan for future operating expenses.

This program would be funded by a new solid waste disposal surcharge on the final disposition of solid waste in the State. The surcharge – set at \$2 per ton of solid waste processed by a refuse disposal system – would be subject to adjustment every two years based on the Consumer Price Index for the Mid-Atlantic Division. But the Maryland Department of the Environment could also potentially increase the surcharge, making it difficult to anticipate actual costs. Additionally, individual counties could be exempt from the statewide surcharge if they enact their own surcharge. This is completely impractical from an operational standpoint. Without a single, predictable fee structure, it will be virtually impossible for companies to develop realistic budgets.

Cockey's generally supports on-farm composting and compost use, food waste prevention, and food rescue projects; however, we believe that the proposed surcharge is the wrong way to promote these objectives. This approach would significantly increase the operational costs for waste management companies. These increased costs would ultimately have to be passed on to households and businesses across the state at a time when many are already facing difficult economic challenges.

It is important to note the proposed surcharge would burden both public and private refuse disposal systems equally, increasing financial issues for local governments struggling to provide essential public services. The resulting rise in disposal fees could lead to higher rates of out-of-state waste disposal, greater collection and transportation costs, and added pressure on the operation of the State's recycling facilities. The program could also lead to greater environmental costs by shipping more waste to out-of-state disposal sites using fossil fuel-powered vehicles.

In summary, while Cockey's supports the objectives of promoting sustainable waste management practices, we believe as currently proposed the above referenced bills, would impose significant financial burdens on waste management companies, consumers, and local governments, all while potentially undermining the efficiency and effectiveness of the State's recycling infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Robert T. Singleton, Jr  
Chief Operating Officer  
Cockeys Enterprises, Inc.

