



W. R. Grace & Co.
7500 Grace Drive
Columbia, MD 21044

Public Hearing Testimony

Maryland HB 1092 - Opposed

February 24, 2025

My name is Manu Rego. I have worked at W. R. Grace in Columbia, Maryland for 11 years and am one of the scientists now working closely on developing a new process for plastic recycling. We began working on this project several years ago when we realized that only a small fraction of plastic is successfully recycled – that figure was just 9% in 2022.

We believe we have invented a process that will safely generate higher yields and purer products, use fewer resources and produce less emissions than other attempts at advanced recycling to-date.

It would be fitting to call this the Gen 2 of advanced recycling.

As the next step in this innovation, we hope to build a pilot lab at our global headquarters in Columbia, Maryland to study the process further.

If passed, HB 1092 could prevent us from pursuing this important research.

HB 1092 could have an immediate and direct impact on the 1,000 Marylanders who work across our global headquarters in Columbia and our largest U.S. manufacturing site in Baltimore.

Grace has conducted research like this in Maryland for over 60 years. In fact, right here in Maryland, Grace scientists have safely developed and tested products that you use every day.

- For example:
- We invented a catalyst in Maryland to help preserve water.
- We invented another one that helps keep your frozen food fresh and safe and makes toys tougher for children.
- We also invented a catalyst that helps make containers to safely hold gasoline in your car.
- Right here in Maryland, we came up with a way to help make cars lighter so you can get better efficiencies.

And now we are working to help our customers recycle plastic safely and in a way that addresses the shortfalls and criticisms of other types of plastic recycling.

Efforts to indiscriminately prevent research like this are shortsighted and anti-progress.

The first refrigerators used Chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs, which contributed to ozone depletion. If lawmakers attacked “refrigeration” wholesale the way this bill attacks advanced recycling, researchers would never have developed alternative refrigerants that have significantly lower environmental impact. And you’d be storing your milk in an icebox.

Early LEDs contained toxins like lead. If lawmakers attacked “light bulbs” wholesale the way this bill attacks advanced recycling, researchers would never have developed lead-free LEDs, which consume less energy than traditional lighting sources. And you’d be using incandescent lights (given their environmental impact, you might be using candlelight).

Early solar panels were inefficient and required large amounts of materials, including toxic substances like cadmium. If lawmakers attacked renewable energy wholesale the way this bill attacks advanced recycling, researchers would never have developed improvements in solar panel efficiency, reducing material requirements and environmental impact.

I am proud to share with you that Grace is already working with several customers to build a demonstration plant – a real plant at one of their sites (not in Maryland) – as the next step in our exciting plastic recycling process. Our customers want to see data from our pilot lab unit so they can begin to scale-up our process and ultimately use it to help meet the new regulations on recycled content around the world, help reduce plastic waste and promote more efficient and cleaner plastic recycling.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could say this innovation was proudly born in Maryland?

All these years as a Marylander, I was always inspired to see the commitment to innovation. This inspiration has turned into a very strong concern and dismay that an opportunity like plastic recycling, with so much potential, can generate so much misunderstanding. I hope my comments today will help assure you that this is a great opportunity for celebrating innovation in Maryland, rather than attempting to shut it down.