

Written Testimony in Support of HB 1058 and HB 1092
Submitted by: Jennifer Robin
Clarksville, Maryland Resident
Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Dear Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing as a **concerned resident of Clarksville, Maryland**, to strongly urge you to **support and pass HB 1058 and HB 1092**. These bills are critical to protecting the health and safety of our communities, ensuring stronger environmental regulations at the local level, and preventing dangerous and misleading waste management practices that threaten our air, water, and public well-being.

HB 1058 – The Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management – Local Authority Bill

HB 1058 is essential to reaffirm and clarify the authority of Maryland counties and municipalities to **enact air and waste management laws that go beyond federal and state minimums**—a right that has been recognized since 1957 at the state level and since 1970 under the federal Clean Air Act.

However, **poorly worded language in state law has put this authority at risk**, allowing opponents to challenge local clean air protections in court. This bill **corrects that ambiguity** and ensures that local governments retain the power to respond to their communities' unique environmental challenges.

Why HB 1058 is Necessary:

- Maryland residents **deserve a say** in the quality of the air they breathe.
- Federal environmental protections are **increasingly under attack**, and Maryland must ensure local governments can **act swiftly** to protect their communities when higher levels of government fail to do so.
- The ability for local governments to set stronger environmental protections has **existed for over 50 years** without causing chaos or excessive legal conflicts.
- A minor wording issue (such as “section” instead of “subsection”) should not be a loophole that prevents localities from keeping their residents safe.

By passing HB 1058, Maryland will **eliminate legal uncertainty** and empower communities to **hold polluters accountable** while protecting public health.

HB 1092 – The Recycling – Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic Bill

HB 1092 **prohibits so-called “chemical recycling” facilities in Maryland**, such as the one proposed by **W.R. Grace in Howard County**. These facilities do not truly recycle plastic but instead use **highly polluting processes like pyrolysis and gasification, which release hazardous toxins into the air and create harmful waste byproducts**.

The evidence against “chemical recycling” is overwhelming. A **U.S. Department of Energy study** found that these processes have extremely **low yields**, with only **0.1% to 14% of the original plastic** actually being reused to create new plastic. Instead, these operations function

more like waste incineration facilities—generating toxic emissions, polluting nearby communities, and contributing to environmental degradation.

Why HB 1092 Must Be Passed:

- **Chemical recycling is misleading and ineffective.** The majority of plastic processed in these facilities is **not actually recycled** into new plastic but instead turned into fuels that are burned, **worsening climate change** rather than reducing plastic waste.
- **These facilities release hazardous air pollution.** Studies have shown they emit **cancer-causing chemicals** such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, and dioxins—substances that **harm public health, damage the nervous system, and increase reproductive risks.**
- **Plastic combustion occurs even without visible flames.** The claim that these facilities do not “burn” plastics is false. Combustion can take place even in low-oxygen environments, releasing dangerous byproducts into the atmosphere.
- **Maryland should not be a dumping ground for toxic waste.** These facilities produce **large amounts of hazardous waste**, creating **long-term environmental and public health hazards** that disproportionately impact local communities.

Banning these facilities in Maryland is a **common-sense** measure that aligns with efforts in **Rhode Island and Colorado**, where lawmakers have already recognized the dangers of plastic pyrolysis and gasification.

Conclusion

Both **HB 1058** and **HB 1092** are necessary to **protect Marylanders from environmental harm, strengthen local governance, and prevent corporate polluters from undermining public health.**

I **urge you to vote in favor** of these bills to safeguard our air, water, and communities for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Robin
Clarksville, Maryland Resident
Stop Grace Team