

I would like to voice my support for House Bill 1092. This will be a vital piece of legislation that prioritizes the health and well-being of Maryland families, especially in my River Hill neighborhood of Columbia. I have been a resident on this community since 2009, and cannot put a price on the community, the cleanliness and local feel for this neighborhood. This bill's proactive stance against plastic-to-fuel facilities safeguards communities from the harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released during chemical conversion processes like pyrolysis and gasification. I am dumbfounded by claims by Grace corporation on the lack of incineration. There is definitely a conversion of plastics to VOCs and other fumes, despite a lack of visible flames or fires. Studies increasingly link VOC exposure to exacerbated asthma symptoms, respiratory illnesses, and other health problems, posing a significant threat to children living near such facilities. By prohibiting these facilities in Maryland, HB 1092 directly addresses the potential for increased pollution in residential areas and the detrimental impact on vulnerable young lungs.

Local authorities understand the unique needs and concerns of their communities better than anyone. HB 1092 will empower residents such as my family and neighbors to assess and decide on the negative health impacts caused by these new plants. This crucial aspect reinforces local Columbia autonomy and allows communities to prioritize the health and safety of our River Hill and Columbia residents over potentially misleading claims of "recycling."

I would also like to point out that chemical recycling is not a genuine solution to the plastic waste crisis. While proponents tout it as a way to handle difficult-to-recycle plastics, the processes themselves are energy-intensive, often produce hazardous byproducts, and have a questionable track record of effectively reducing plastic waste. This is especially true of the Grace corporation's track record on prior environmental mishaps, including the ones in Libby, Montana, Woburn, Massachusetts, and the water-poisoning fine by the EPA. Instead of contributing to a circular economy, plastics "recycling" distracts from the real solutions: reducing plastic production, improving traditional recycling infrastructure, promoting reusable alternatives, and holding producers accountable for the end-of-life management of their products.

I endorse HB 1092 in protecting families of Columbia and River Hill, and empowering communities to prioritize public health. By banning the construction of plastic-to-fuel facilities and ensuring a more accurate definition of recycling, this bill will steer Maryland towards a truly sustainable approach to waste management.