



NATIONAL AQUARIUM®

Date: February 26, 2025

Bill: HB 1092 - Recycling - Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic

Position: Support

Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for HB 1092 - Recycling - Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic. This legislation would appropriately ensure that Maryland's definition of recycling does not include chemical conversion of plastics and would prohibit construction of facilities that convert plastic to fuel or feedstock.

Stopping plastic pollution is one of the National Aquarium's three strategic conservation goals. The plastic pollution crisis has been well-documented as global plastic production has outpaced any other manufactured material.¹ Waste management practices are unable to keep up with the sheer volume of plastic we produce. Municipalities and taxpayers continue to bear the burdens of current waste management inadequacies in the form of waste disposal costs, environmental justice concerns, and harmful litter. Despite developed waste management systems in the U.S., experts estimate that between one and two million metric tons of plastic waste enters the environment² where it endangers wildlife, contaminates the global food web, and transports toxins harmful to human health.

Solutions to the plastic pollution crisis include policies that prioritize plastic reduction and reuse, extended producer responsibility programs, minimum recycled content standards, and other measures being considered by this committee that would help improve existing recycling infrastructure and support production of fewer products or packaging made from virgin polymers. "Advanced" chemical recycling is falsely marketed³ as an effective way to address plastic pollution but mainly results in plastics being burned as the fossil fuels they were originally derived from. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a long-standing position⁴ that solid waste, including plastic, that is converted to fuels or energy is not considered recycling. Plastic chemical conversion processes are unproven, cannot be scaled in a timely or cost-effective manner, and rely on fossil fuels that drive climate change and air pollution.

Instead of addressing the root causes of the plastic pollution crisis, chemical recycling threatens to keep us further entrenched in them. Addressing the harmful impacts of the plastic pollution crisis requires comprehensive, proven, and systemic change. Chemical recycling cannot and should not be part of those changes in Maryland. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1092.**

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¹ Geyer, R. et al. 2017. Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. Science Advances (3):7. DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.1700782

² National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine 2022. [Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste](#).

³ ProPublica 2024. [Selling a mirage](#).

⁴ U.S. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). (1997). [Measuring recycling: A guide for state and local governments](#) (EPA530-R-97-011).