



**Testimony in Opposition to HB 987
Environment – Recycling – Hotels**

Maryland hotels are often leaders in sustainability and green initiatives that lessen our environmental impact. Much of our industry voluntarily encourages recycling throughout our facilities – ranging from branded to independent hotels both large and small. Hotel chains and multi-state operators / management companies encourage hotels to go as far as they can with recycling despite restrictions and confines that vary from one jurisdiction to the next, creating challenges beyond our control. Singling out one segment of the business community with a statewide recycling mandate of this magnitude – and establishing penalties on top of it - hardly seems fair, especially when considering even the State Government is only mandated to recycle 30%¹.

The proposed bill mandates that all glass, plastic, aluminum, paper and paper products used by hotel staff or guests must be recycled. Even if there are separate trash receptacles in each room, not all guests comply. Even if there are recycling receptacles in the common areas, guests may still put trash in with the recycling and vice versa. **That means that our housekeeping staffs become trash divers.**

At the present time, there is much confusion in the recycling world and few Maryland counties have the same rules as to what can be recycled. While some have single stream recycling, Allegany, Caroline, Dorchester, Garrett, Somerset, St. Mary's, Wicomico and Worcester only accept plastic #1 and #2 bottles. In Prince Georges, they even accept margarine and sour cream tubs. Washington County accepts #1 thru #7 plastics, but Calvert takes only #1 thru #5 and #7.

We've been told that envelopes with see-through address labels can corrupt an entire load of paper, yet many of the counties accept "all office paper". We also understand that black plastic ruins a load of plastic, but a few of Maryland's counties accept all plastic. For example, Prince George's accepts buckets and other household type plastics.

Axios² reported this week that recycling is experiencing a significant issue in that markets for products are drying up. China used to take 70% of the U.S. recyclables, but has stopped. Several U.S. cities have ceased their recycling programs in light of escalating costs. Baltimore County just reported that it had over seven years of glass

¹ See: Maryland Department of the Environment website:

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/LAND/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/Pages/faqs.aspx#1>

² Axios is an American news website founded in 2016 by former Politico staffers Jim VandeHei, Mike Allen, and Roy Schwartz.



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stockpiled that they haven't been able to sell. So where will all these recyclables from hotels go?

It seems that it would be prudent to allow Maryland hotels and other businesses to create recycling programs with their haulers as the haulers can find recyclers to accept the products.

We also believe that mandating a civil penalty to be applied by either the county or a municipality of \$150 per day is excessive and unnecessary.

Therefore, we ask the Committees to give this bill an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For further information, contact:

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