

CORY V. MCCRAY
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 221
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3165 • 301-858-3165
800-492-7122 Ext. 3165
Cory.Mccray@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee
Capital Budget Subcommittee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill 2

Bill Title: Maryland Environmental Service Reform Act of 2021

Hearing Date: January 27, 2021 – Budget and Taxation

Chair: The Honorable Guy Guzzone; Vice Chair: The Honorable James Rosapepe

I write to you today in **support** of Senate Bill 2. The Maryland Environmental Service (MES) is an independent agency of the State of Maryland, which is tasked with preserving our State's environment. While state funds are not directly appropriated to MES, nearly all of its revenue is from state and local governments that contracts with MES to manage several environmental projects such as landfill operations and recycling. On May 31, 2020 (in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic), former MES Director Roy McGrath resigned to become Chief of Staff to the Governor. Upon the Director's resignation, the MES Board of Directors – on which the Director and Deputy Director currently sits – approved a severance package close to \$300,000. In the past, MES Directors have only received severance packages upon leaving state government service. Mr. McGrath, however, did not leave state government service.

When Mr. McGrath's severance package became apparent, the Maryland General Assembly's subsequent investigation found that the former Director misled the Board of Directors and regularly approved his own expenses, including to international conferences. Mr. McGrath's MES tenure was akin to a CEO of a private company rather than as director of a quasi-government state agency.

The purpose of Senate Bill 2 is to remove the Director and Deputy Director from the MES Board of Directors; and to require the Board's Secretary and the Treasurer to be selected from amongst its members rather than the Deputy Director dually-serving in the roles. Further, the bill would prevent the Board from awarding a severance package to any individual not exiting state government employment. The MES Director would also be required to appoint a diversity officer and the State Treasurer would serve on the Board of Directors, providing additional financial oversight.

If enacted, this bill would take effect on July 1, 2021. The Maryland Environmental Service would be required to establish policies consistent with the Act.

In efforts to increase government ethics and public trust while simultaneously holding the Maryland Environmental Service accountable, we hope that you will move for a **favorable** report of Senate Bill 2.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator