



Maryland Senate Bill 116
Testimony of the American Chemistry Council
Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
January 19, 2021

On behalf of the members of the Plastics Division of the American Chemistry Council (ACC), thank you for this opportunity to **urge support** of Senate Bill 116 (S.B. 116) which would require the Recycling Office of the Environment Department to promote and make recommendations to support market development for recycled products.

ACC thanks Senator Cheryl Kagan for her leadership on this important issue.

ACC and our members are deeply committed to creating a more circular economy for plastics and working to help end plastic waste in the environment. That is why ACC and our members have established goals to reuse, recycle or recover all plastic packaging in the United States by 2040 and make all U.S. plastic packaging recyclable or recoverable by 2030.²

An important component of these goals is creating sustainable end markets for recycled plastics. *S.B. 116 will help those efforts.*

A critical challenge for increasing recycled content use is ensuring that a reliable high-quality supply is available. However, it is important that we not only maximize the supply of recycled plastics that have solid end markets now, but also work to grow the collection, sortation and processing of post-use plastics to help meet future supply needs. Through new innovations in traditional and advanced recycling, a growing scope and amount of plastics can be converted to many different types of recycled content products.

ACC supports the goals and actions set forth in the bill and urges its support. Should the legislation be enacted, ACC encourages the State of Maryland to consider promoting initiatives such as those set for the below, to further its market development goals.

- Over the last three years, there have been announced investments of over \$5 billion in new plastics recycling facilities including mechanical and advanced recycling. This new investment will open up new markets in coming months and years.

¹ ACC represents a diverse set of companies engaged in the U.S. business of chemistry, a \$768 billion enterprise that is helping to solve the biggest challenges facing our country and the world. Chemistry touches 96 percent of all manufactured goods, and the use of plastics in modern automotive, building and construction, and food packaging industries is helping to create a more sustainable society.

² "U.S. Plastics Resin Producers Set Circular Economy Goals to Recycle or Recover 100% of Plastic Packaging by 2040," news release, 9 May 2018, <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Media/PressReleasesTranscripts/ACC-news-releases/US-Plastics-Producers-Set-Circular-Economy-Goals-to-Recycle-or-Recover-100-Percent-of-Plastic-Packaging-by-2040.html>.



- In addition many plastic companies have made major commitments to use recycled content in coming years. They will become large markets for used plastics to make new chemicals and plastics. For example, Shell's target is to use 1 million metric tons of plastic waste a year as feedstock in its global chemical plants by 2025. Many additional company commitments can be seen in *The Roadmap to Reuse: Plastics Solutions for America 2020*³
- *Materials Recovery for the Future*. The Materials Recovery for the Future (MRFF) project is a research pilot focused on identifying how to effectively collect, sort, and recycle flexible plastics⁴ via residential curbside recycling programs. MRFF recently released a report that demonstrates that with adequate optical sorting capacity and peripherals, flexible plastic packaging (FPP) can be efficiently captured in a large single-stream material recovery facility (MRF) and processed into a commodity bale, known as rFlex, for reuse in a variety of markets while diverting plastic from landfills. The report also identifies more than a dozen end market opportunities for rFlex bales that Maryland may consider in its efforts to enhance recycling. Building products like roofing materials represent the highest volume and most immediate end market opportunities. Other high-volume opportunities for using rFlex are pallets and railroad ties, where recycled plastic can serve as a more durable alternative to traditional wood⁵.
- *Wrap Recycling Action Program*. ACC encourages Maryland to promote recycled content plastics products created from recovered polyethylene (PE) film collected through store takeback programs⁶. These products include plastic envelopes, trash bags, traffic barricades, mats, plastic composite playgrounds, decking and recreational equipment and railroad ties. ACC's Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP) promotes the recycling of PE film and the use of recycled content film products. WRAP is partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, the Association of Plastics Recyclers, and several state and local governments to educate consumers on the ability to recycle PE film packaging through more than 17,000 stores drop-off sites nationwide.
- Again, ACC urges support of S.B. 116 and applauds the sponsors' efforts to increase demand for recycled content. Should this proposal become law, we are eager to assist the department in operationalizing this important piece of legislation.

If you have any questions or if I may be of further service, please feel free to contact me at Josh.Young@americanchemistry.com or (404) 401-3343.

³ <https://www.reuseplastics.org/files/0ad2b4b877997c3b91878b785b6e51f821857c2d.pdf>

⁴ Examples include: product overwraps, food pouches, chip bags, pet food bags.

⁵ Materials Recovery For the Future, "Nation's First Pilot Project Recycling Flexible Plastic Packaging Yields Successful Results," news release, 2020, <https://www.materialsrecoveryforthefuture.com/press-releases/2020-research-results/>.

⁶ Items collected include: bags for groceries, newspapers, produce, and bread; dry cleaning wraps; bubble wrap and air pillows; product overwrap from bulk products (cases of water bottles, bathroom tissue, paper towels, etc.)