



**Bill:** SB 116

**Date:** January 21, 2021

**Position:** Support

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## **Department of the Environment – Office of Recycling – Recycling Market Development**

### **SB 116**

#### **Support with Amendment**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Trash Free Maryland supports SB 116, with an amendment, which is a bill seeking to promote the development of markets for recycled materials and recycled products within the state. The purpose of this bill is laudable and necessary; however, Trash Free Maryland is concerned about the possible inclusion of a chemical process known by several misnomers, such as “advanced recycling”, and “chemical recycling,” which purports to convert plastic materials back into plastic, but more often than not turns plastic into fossil fuel which is then burned. Here are some “chemical recycling” concerns from a recent [report by GAIA](#):

- Heavy investments are needed to build a chemical recycling facility, procure and prepare the feedstock, manage toxic byproducts, and deal with technical failures. These high operating costs and the lack of concrete results make these projects a risky investment.
- As of 2017, similar technologies have wasted at least \$2 billion of investments with canceled or failed projects across the globe.
- “Chemical recycling” (aka plastic-to-fuel) is competing against, and losing to, virgin plastic production.
- What comes in must come out: plastic can contain thousands of chemicals, including known toxins. These toxic substances must go somewhere-- as emissions, waste byproducts, and in the resulting product. If these fuels and products have even been tested for toxicity, the results are not public.
- Plastic-to-fuel facilities place a heavy toxic burden on communities and workers at plastic waste processing sites, in the end use of the products they produce, and at the facilities where the waste created by the process is dumped, destroyed, or treated.
- Over half of the plastic that is processed in these facilities comes out as climate pollution. That's on top of the emissions from burning the resulting fuel.

- In one of the industry's most celebrated "chemical recycling" plants, Agilyx, over 2x the amount of greenhouse gases are produced for each unit of product.
- While industry claims that plastic-to-fuel lowers carbon footprint compared to conventional fossil fuels, such claims either lack independent verification or are based on arbitrary, partial life-cycle assessment models.

The full report from GAIA is available at <https://www.no-burn.org/chemical-recycling-us/>.

Trash Free Maryland's concern is that SB 116 could inadvertently lead to plastic collected in Maryland being sent to "chemical recycling" facilities and therefore burned instead of recycled. Trash Free Maryland hopes that an amendment can be added to this bill that would ensure that recyclable materials collected in Maryland do not end up at "chemical recycling" facilities.

**We urge a favorable report on SB 116 as long as the issue of chemical conversion is addressed appropriately.** Thank you.

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