



**HB 807- Task Force on Recycling Policy and Recycling and Waste Systems in Maryland - Environment, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 31, 2021
Position: Favorable**

This session, you have heard multiple bills that aim to alleviate the plastic pollution crisis and how to deal with our overflowing landfills and toxic incinerators. It is no secret that we have a waste problem in this state and country - **in fact, the U.S. throws out enough plastic approximately every 11 hours to fill the Ravens stadium, and that amount is increasing.**

Our Waste Crisis

So how do we manage all this waste? Let's use plastic as an example. Let's say you discard some plastic packaging. In our current system, a local municipality will likely have to pay to collect and transport that plastic to a waste management facility. More often than not, this piece of plastic will likely be landfilled or incinerated, creating toxic air and water pollution and breaking down into microplastics. Those microplastics will persist and accumulate in the environment, some finding their way into the food we eat and the water we drink. Even the small amount of plastic that is recycled will likely be recycled into a less durable product like insulation or fabric, so the process will need to start again to create new plastic that will inevitably become waste.

This broken model is incredibly costly for our local governments, and for taxpayers. Our recycling rates are low, people have lost faith in the recycling system, and recycling markets for our plastic waste are less and less reliable.

The growing challenges of plastic pollution, climate change and rising recycling costs demand new solutions to Maryland's waste problems.

HB 807 allows us to think through new, innovative solutions to our waste problem. Through better recycling systems and the adoption of zero waste principles, we can decrease the amount of waste ending up in landfills and incinerators, and littering our communities.

Every year, we come to this assembly with bills that aim to alleviate our waste problem. From producer responsibility to single-use bans, there are proven solutions to this burden. We are hopeful that HB 807 will help bring together partners from across many sectors, allowing us to agree on both upstream and downstream solutions that will help improve Maryland's waste management and change our culture from one of single-use to one deeply rooted in principles of reuse and reduction.

We urge a favorable report, and thank you for your attention to this critical issue.