



February 24, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: House Bill 1103 – Task Force to Study Recycling and the Processing of Solid Waste**

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed House Bill 1103 entitled *Task Force to Study Recycling and the Processing of Solid Waste* and would like to provide the Committee with some information regarding this bill.

House Bill 1103 would establish a task force to study recycling and the new technologies available for the processing of municipal solid waste for the purposes of reducing the amount of solid waste being landfilled. The study would be required to examine various topics, including a regional approach to managing municipal solid waste and the use of emerging technologies. On or before December 31, 2021, the task force would be required to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly. The Secretaries of the Environment and Commerce, or their designees, would co-chair for the task force. The Secretary of the Environment would be required to appoint several specified members to the task force and MDE would staff the task force.

MDE is responsible for overseeing counties' overall solid waste and recycling planning through the review of 10-year solid waste management plans (SWMPs). Among other things, SWMPs require counties to evaluate needs for recycling and management of solid waste and identify the facilities that will be used to meet those needs. The Maryland Recycling Act requires the counties to plan for and meet minimum recycling rates of 20 or 35 percent, depending on population. While these broad requirements are overseen at the state level, individual counties determine how they will provide for solid waste management and recycling according to local needs. MDE supports the concept of sustainable materials management, which seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of materials throughout their entire lifecycles, from manufacturing to management at end of life. MDE has established voluntary statewide goals to encourage and chart progress toward sustainable materials management.

MDE is also supportive of cooperative and creative means of recycling and waste diversion, including through new technologies. Several examples of regional cooperation exist. Baltimore and Harford Counties have an existing agreement in which some of Harford County's waste is processed through the transfer facility at the Baltimore County Eastern Sanitary Landfill Solid Waste Management Facility. The Maryland Environmental Service operates the Midshore Regional Solid Waste System that serves the solid waste management and recycling needs of Talbot, Caroline,

Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties. The Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal assists Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery Counties and Baltimore City with the planning and development of waste management and waste-to-energy systems by serving as a regional coordinating agency and a financing vehicle for facilities.

The bill would take effect July 1, 2021 and the report is due on or before December 31, 2021. It may be difficult to convene the task force and thoroughly consider and make the required recommendations in a period of six months. Additionally, there are several bills currently before the General Assembly that create workgroups and task forces to examine various aspects of solid waste and recycling. House Bill 1094 and Senate Bill 650 would create a workgroup to evaluate the establishment of a regional waste disposal facility to serve Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Carroll County, Harford County, and Howard County, with a report due December 1, 2021. House Bill 807 would create a task force to review and update the Maryland Recycling Act, with a report due December 1, 2021. Because the timelines, and to some extent the topics, of these studies overlap, it may be preferable to combine these into a single effort, streamline the scope, and extend the timeline for completion through at least July 1, 2022.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor House Bill 1103 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at [tyler.abbott@maryland.gov](mailto:tyler.abbott@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott", written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable William Wivell  
Ms. Kaley Laleker, Director, Land and Materials Administration