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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB1094

Workgroup to Evaluate the Establishment of a Regional Waste Disposal Facility

Delegate Sheila Ruth

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Waste is becoming an increasing problem for local jurisdictions. Landfills are filling up, and recycling markets are not as well developed as we need them to be. Decomposing food waste is a major contributor to the climate crisis, yet there is limited ability to divert organic waste in Maryland. Plastic waste is breaking down into microplastic particles, which can now be found everywhere on earth, including in animals and humans.

Each of the local jurisdictions is working on finding solutions to the problem of what to do with our waste, but there are advantages to working regionally. Economies of scale can lead to cost savings. Recycling markets may be easier to develop with the greater output of multiple jurisdictions. Counties and Baltimore City working together along with other stakeholders may be better able to find creative solutions.

HB1094 creates a workgroup to evaluate the establishment of a regional waste disposal facility to serve Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, and Howard County. The workgroup will include representatives of each of these jurisdictions as well as representatives of other stakeholders and experts.

I've submitted amendments that clarify that the intent of the bill is for the workgroup to look at the problem of waste holistically and focus on diversion as well as disposal. The workgroup will report on various items, including siting of a new regional waste diversion and disposal facility, cost sharing, developing markets and networks, consolidation, phasing out incineration, focusing on recycling, reuse, and composting, and advancing the principles of zero waste.

I request a favorable report on HB1094.