



SB412 – “Consumer Protection - Right to Repair”
Testimony before Senate Finance Committee
February 3, 2021
Position: Favorable

Madame Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB412**, to allow consumers the information needed to facilitate repair and reuse of the growing mountain of digital electronic equipment. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that we have less than 10 years to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Coincidentally we have an e-waste problem that is becoming a global catastrophe for both developing nations and for the planet. The picture at the right is a scene that is playing out around the globe, where “advanced” countries ship their digital waste streams to economically disadvantaged countries, where child laborers and the poor pick through for salvage. This E-waste contains toxic heavy metals such as zinc, nickel, lead, and chromium. Also, digital electronics such as cellphones are incredibly resource and energy-intensive to manufacture, contributing significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions and the need to extract heavy metals and other materials through mining.



Fortunately, there are solutions that can help alleviate this problem. Through better recycling and repair practices, many of these products can find new life as used products and parts. The growing DIY movement puts people to work repairing and replacing parts that can help an old mobile phone find a new user, or for us to be able to hold on to our laptops and other equipment for longer times. This in turn will provide business opportunities for a new generation of recycling and parts salvaging right here at home, and reduce the amount of E-waste that is landfilled, incinerated or shipped overseas.

SB412 does just that, requiring the necessary information from product manufacturers in order for ordinary people to reuse and recycle a variety of devices. It breaks the cycle of “planned obsolescence”, and the heavy toll this has on our environment. All of which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the need for raw materials, transportation, shipping and disposal.

This is an urgent moral and environmental issue. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Richard Deutschmann
Columbia, MD