



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov
FAX 410-313-3051

February 2, 2022

Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair
House Environment & Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: HB 307: Environment – Packaging Materials – Producer Responsibility

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee,

As you know, the collection and disposal of solid waste has been a core function for most local governments for several generations. Overtime, the various methods of waste disposal grew in both expense and in negative impact on the environment. Early on, Howard County led the way in recycling efforts and adopted single-stream recycling where residents put all recycled material unsorted in a single bin. Through a private contractor, the collected material was sorted and sold, when possible, in the open market for raw recycled material.

In Fiscal year 2011, Howard County received \$1.3 million from our contract with the private recycling facility. In FY20 that same contract cost our County \$1.1 million. While we expect an increase in FY22, this does not factor in the roughly \$4 million it costs for curbside collection. In addition to the high cost of curbside collection and disposal of solid waste, this issue presents a significant financial and environmental challenge to our County and surrounding jurisdictions.

The collapse of the recycled material market was a wake-up call to governments, consumers, and environmentalists. The volatility in the recycling market showed us that local governments are caught in a position where we have the responsibility to manage waste financially and environmentally, but no authority or ability to impact the markets in the right direction.

This bill would help break that harmful cycle by developing appropriate incentives for those who can create a market for the material collected – the manufacturers. With the establishment of an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program, our local recycling initiatives will be more likely to enter into a stable marketplace as more demand is developed for the material. The EPR program is not a new concept, Japan, South Korea and the European Union have adopted this measure.

Here in Howard County, we look to shape policies that will fundamentally support our conservation efforts. Whether it is our work cultivating the largest solar agreement in the state, the creation of a pollinator habitat, a robust green infrastructure network or implementing the strongest Forest Conservation policy in the state. It's critical that we continue to find innovative ways to fight for environmental sustainability. This bill represents precisely that model in the field of waste management.

I would like to express my appreciation for environmental leadership shown by this committee, and especially for Delegate Lierman for her work on this critical bill. I appreciate your consideration and urge a favorable report.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive