



TESTIMONY TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HB 700: Environment - Products and Packaging - Labeling, Marketing, and Advertising for Recycling

POSITION: Support

By: Nancy Soreng - LWVMD President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) supports **House Bill 700**, which updates regulations for and reinforces the integrity of product labeling in regards to environmental and recycling claims.

Though Maryland has a waste diversion rate of 45% (CY 2019), recycling contamination presents a serious issue. When non-recyclable items are present in a batch, the entire load is deemed non-recyclable, including the correctly recycled items. Oftentimes, contamination stems from consumers' desire to act responsibly, leading to an effect called "wishful recycling." Though the intentions may be noble, the effects can be disastrous, decreasing efficiency in recycling centers and sending otherwise salvageable items to landfills. The labeling restrictions that **House Bill 700** would enact would ease the burden on consumers to assess and correctly decide how to dispose of an item, in turn reducing recycling contamination.

The League values informed decision-making on solid waste management, considering the potential impacts on the environment, public health, and the economy, and how those impacts may affect communities of varying socio-economic status. **House Bill 700** would not only support recycling efforts, but would preserve the ability of consumers to make informed choices about the products they are buying. Eco-friendly or "green" products have become increasingly popular, as both customers and businesses aim to reduce their carbon footprints. **House Bill 700** would protect consumers against businesses who may exploit this green "trend" by falsifying environmental claims.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland strongly urges a favorable report by this committee on **House Bill 700**, in hopes of protecting both our planet and our consumers.