



Charles County Government

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Mark Belton
County Administrator

February 23, 2022

Bill: HB 307/SB 292 – Environment - Packaging Materials - Producer Responsibility
Committee: House – Environment and Transportation; Economic Matters; Senate – Finance
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Madam Chair Kelley, Messrs. Barve, Wilson, and Committee Members:

The County Commissioners of Charles County are in support of HB 307/ SB 292, Packaging Materials – Extended Responsibility, which outlines a framework for an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) model that would place responsibility on packaging producers for end-of-life management.

As a result of the loss of global recycling markets, Charles County's cost to process single-stream recycling increased dramatically over the last few years. In 2017, Charles County earned approximately \$30,000 for collected single-stream recyclables. However, in 2019, it cost Charles County \$700,000 to process single-stream recyclables. Curbside collection of recycling cost per home has increased from \$1.74 to \$3.65 per house in Charles County in that same time period. Nonetheless, we remain committed to providing the needed resources to foster environmental sustainability in our community, and just recently extended our curbside recycling program into Nanjemoy, Maryland.

The Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) guidelines estimate a 19.9% contamination rate of single-stream recyclables, which mainly consist of packaging for household products. The contamination rate for some jurisdictions may be higher based on hard to recycle items and confusing labels and recycling identification symbols. The proposed legislation seeks to address these problems at their source. It will help Charles County, and other Maryland jurisdictions, by shifting some of the cost burden of recycling programs from resident taxpayers to packaging producers. This bill encourages producers to make packaging that is more easily recyclable and more environmentally friendly.

We encourage a favorable committee report on HB 307/ SB 292. Our current model is not sustainable. We must do what is needed to provide new resources to struggling recycling networks throughout Maryland. By making packaging producers more responsible for their role in adding to the waste stream, jurisdictions around the State can reduce unnecessary waste and streamline recycling efforts.

Sincerely,

County Commissioners of Charles County
Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President

cc: Charles County Delegation