

MHLA
Maryland Hotel
Lodging Association

HB 91 – Environment – Recycling – Hotels
Economic Matters Committee
February 8, 2023

Position: Opposed

Dear Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee:

As the sole statewide trade association dedicated to advocacy for Maryland's lodging industry, we respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB 91.

We view this bill as unnecessary since the hotel industry has self-regulated its commitment to sustainability. "[Responsible Stay](#)" is a national campaign endorsed by MHLA, along with major hotel brands, management companies and hotels across the country. There are four areas of focus: 1) Energy Efficiency, 2) Water Conservation, 3) Responsible Sourcing, and 4) Waste Reduction. Our commitment to [waste reduction](#) is most applicable to this bill, and includes reducing single use plastics and other materials, using innovative kitchen management practices, increasing composting programs **AND increasing both staff and guest recycling programs.** (See separate attachment for 1-page overview on Responsible Stay.)

Many hotels already provide recycling receptacles throughout their properties and encourage guests as well as staff to recycle all accepted materials. However, if the recycling receptacles are not properly utilized, we cannot require hotel employees to sort trash, primarily for safety reasons. We believe this bill would place the burden of sorting on hotels (p. 1, lines 19-22 and p. 2, lines 1-8) and may unfairly issue a civil penalty of up to \$150 a day (page 2, lines 19-21) if, despite a hotel's best efforts, recyclable materials are contaminated or mistakenly thrown away as trash.

Recycling is highly dependent on the services offered at the local level, and there are many variances from one locality to the next. The specific materials listed on p.2, lines 5-6, (all glass, plastic, aluminum, paper, and paper products) may or may not be accepted for recycling. Multiple members in multiple cities / counties have reported going through the effort to separate recyclable materials at their properties, only to have haulers take all waste away in one truck based on separation taking place at a waste transfer station before being sent on to a recycling center. In [Ocean City](#) all municipal solid waste is collected and sent to a waste-to-energy plant without any separation requirements. In this case, it would be a worthless endeavor and expense for Ocean City hotels to provide recycling receptacles throughout their properties.

On page 2, lines 13-15, the bill proposes that "a county may require an owner, an operator, or a manager of a hotel to report on recycling activities in a manner determined by the county." The information required for such a report would likely be dependent on data provided by a third-party hauler. While some haulers may provide the necessary data, we are told that others do not, which could make it impossible for a hotel to comply with reporting requirements.

From **waste reduction** and **water conservation** to **energy efficiency** and **responsible sourcing**, our members are working to provide employees, guests, and communities a "[Responsible Stay](#)". Recycling is a highly localized service that hotels support when it's effective for them to do so, but this bill does not account for factors outside of the industry's control when it comes to recycling.

The Maryland Hotel Lodging Association respectfully requests an Unfavorable Report on HB 91.