

HB 161 Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority – Evaluation and Termination of Bond Authority (Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority Sunset Act)

Sponsored by Delegates [Korman](#) and [Szeliga](#)

Hearing 2/08 at 1:30 p.m.

Senate Environment & Transportation Committee

Organization: Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Position: Favorable

Prohibiting the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority from issuing bonds beginning June 1, 2023; requiring the Department of Legislative Services to evaluate the Authority providing enough detail for the General Assembly to determine whether the Authority should continue in its current form; requiring the Maryland Environmental Service and the Maryland Clean Energy Center to review certain aspects of the Authority and analyze whether the Environmental Service or the Clean Energy Center could assume those aspects; etc.

The Environmental Justice Ministry of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church strongly supports HB161, the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority Sunset Act, sponsored by Delegates Korman and Szeliga. This legislation tasks the Department of Legislative Services with conducting an evaluation of the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, a basic good-government step recommended for all such quasi-governmental agencies by the State Transparency and Accountability Review Commission in 2021. Since we do not want to see any new trash incinerators built in Maryland, and since other business conducted by the Waste Disposal Authority is duplicative of other quasi-governmental agencies, it makes sense for the state to evaluate this agency and carefully consider what are the right steps for its future.

*The Maryland Environmental Service Reform Act of 2021 made a number of improvements to MES's operations, transparency, and accountability; it also requires MES to report to the legislature on its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions annually, something the Waste Disposal Authority is not required to do. Given the large impact that solid waste management techniques have on the environment, it makes sense to have measures like that in place.*

- This legislation does not prevent the Waste Disposal Authority from providing the procurement and management services that it has been conducting with participating counties for the past several years; that will be able to continue while DLS conducts its evaluation. The legislation does prevent the Waste Disposal Authority from issuing new bonds; this is important to prevent any additional encumbrances that would prevent the legislature from acting on the information in DLS's report after it is completed in December 2024. The Waste Disposal Authority reported to the legislature last month that*

*it did not issue any new bonds during 2021 or 2022 and has no plans to issue bonds during 2023.*

- *The State Transparency and Accountability Review Commission recommended that every quasi-governmental agency (QGA) receive periodic reviews at least every eight years, which has not happened. The Commission recommended that these reviews consider questions like: Is there still a need for this QGA? Is this QGA continuing to fulfill legislative intent? Should this agency continue as a QGA? Should this agency move back to a governmental agency? Has this agency operated with transparency and accountability? This legislation implements this recommendation, a basic good-government measure.*

For all of these reasons, please pass the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority Sunset Act, so that the Department of Legislative Services may conduct this valuable review and the legislature can consider its findings in 2025.

Thank you,

Nanci Wilkinson

Environmental Justice Ministry

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

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