



Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB0284 – Environment - Reducing Packaging Materials - Producer Responsibility Support
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 22, 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB284. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB284.

HB284 establishes a requirement for producers of packaging materials to develop and implement producer responsibility plans for specific products, which must be submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for review and approval by April 1, 2026. Unless the producer has an approved plan on file with MDE, they may not sell, offer for sale, distribute, or import for sale or distribution packaging materials for use in the State.

Packaging makes up 28% of Maryland’s waste stream, of which 40% is plastic. Currently, taxpayers cover the cost of the handling, processing, and disposal of packaging. This bill aims to *reduce* packaging by placing the responsibility on the producers. The bill creates a framework and program to shift recycling costs from taxpayers to the producers who actually design the packaging. The framework will allow producers to set up incentive systems to reward lower volume/higher recyclable packaging, with public oversight and transparency. Currently, counties pay the full cost of collection, sorting, and resale of packaging. HB284 provides that the revenue generated by the incentive system will be used to reimburse counties for a portion of their packaging recycling costs.

Maryland currently has producer responsibility programs for some products (e.g., tires and electronics), and packaging producer responsibility programs have been adopted in Colorado, Maine, Oregon and California. Expanding Maryland’s producer responsibility programs to include packaging is an idea whose time has come. Reducing packaging and increasing its recyclability makes sense and producers should be part of the solution. For these reasons, we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for HB284 in committee.