

HB284/SB222 – Environment – Reducing Packaging Materials –
Producer Responsibility
February 20, 2023

Position: Favorable

I, John Ford, support HB284/SB222 to improve recycling programs in Maryland, reduce waste, and save taxpayer money.

My local Baltimore City is struggling to support recycling programs (down to once every two weeks) while facing an ever increasing stream of hard to recycle waste from the products we buy. Our recycling rates are low, people have lost faith in the recycling system, and recycling markets for our plastic waste are less and less reliable, all because producers continue to make wasteful, often non-recyclable products with no responsibility for management. HB284/SB222 can help address these problems by requiring that producers support infrastructure to manage packaging waste, while incentivizing them to make more recyclable products.

Producer responsibility has proven to be an effective approach to reducing waste and improving recycling. Such laws already exist in jurisdictions around the world, and they are working well to manage packaging and provide safe disposal for polluting and hazardous items. From Maine to Oregon, states are beginning to act, and Maryland should join them.

Consumers are frustrated by the lack of sustainable options on the shelf, and the ease in which they should be able to recycle. At the same time, companies that produce wasteful single-use plastic products, beverage containers, and other waste that litters our communities, fills our landfills, and is burned in our incinerators have avoided paying up for decades. A big reason why packaging pollution is on the rise is because producers are absolved of all responsibility for where their products end up, and whether their products are labeled correctly. That leaves you and me with confusion and limited choices, meanwhile footing the bill for managing the waste. This law begins to change that by requiring producers to bear some of the costs of our recycling system.

We must also aggressively enact measures to reduce waste and move away from packaging that causes harm to the planet and public health in its production and disposal, like Maryland's ban on foam food packaging; but there is certainly more we can do.

I respectfully urge a favorable report.

John Ford

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