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MAYOR

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HB 91

February 8, 2023

TO: Members of the Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 91 – Environment – Recycling – Hotels
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 91.

HB 91 would require an owner, an operator, or a manager of a hotel to provide recycling for the guests of the hotel and recycle certain materials on or before October 1, 2024. The bill would require the recycling to be carried out in accordance with the recycling plan required for the county in which the hotel is located. In addition, the bill would authorize a county to require an owner, an operator, or a manager of a hotel to report information to the county in a manner determined by the county. Enforcement, inspection and penalties collected under the bill would be paid to the county, municipality, or other local government that brought the enforcement action.

Mandatory recycling in hotels is another step forward in encouraging recycling and sustainability in Maryland. State law already requires recycling in multi-family dwellings of 10 or more units, and in office buildings of a certain size. It also requires recycling at special events. The more opportunities that residents and visitors have to recycle both at home and away from home, the more their recycling habits and commitment to recycling will grow.

Many jurisdictions, including Baltimore City, currently face difficulty in reaching the State-mandated recycling goals, set by the Maryland Recycling Act. This change to the law would assist with that problem as well as meeting the State's overall recycling goals. Although HB 91 emphasizes that a county or municipality would decide how hotels recycle and the enforcement procedures, the City is committed to a cleaner, greener Baltimore.

Baltimore City has a flourishing hospitality economy which is recovering after COVID restrictions. According to the Visit Baltimore Annual Report, there were 348,955 hotel room night visits in Baltimore for FY 2019-2020. Visitors come to enjoy the professional sports teams, sightsee, visit the renowned hospitals, attend conferences and more. Providing recycling in visitors hotel rooms is an opportunity to divert materials out of the City's waste stream and demonstrate the City's commitment to one of the most basic environmentally-friendly services.

In order to increase recycling rates, support Maryland's reputation as an environmentally-friendly state, and to improve the experience of visitors to hotels in the state, Baltimore City supports legislation that encourages hotel recycling.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 91.