



Scott Cassel
Chief Executive Officer/Founder

Board of Directors

Abby Boudouris – **President**
OR Dept. of Environmental Quality

Tom Metzner – **Vice President**
CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

Jennifer Semrau – **Treasurer**
WI Dept. of Natural Resources

Christina Seibert – **Clerk**
Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County, IL

Darla Arians
CO Dept. of Public Health and Environment

Seth Hackman
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, NJ

Jennifer Heaton-Jones
Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority, CT

Jennifer Holliday
Chittenden Solid Waste District, VT

Mallory Anderson
Hennepin County, MN

Mia Roethlein
VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Patrick Riley
OK Dept. of Environmental Quality

Honorary Director

Walter Willis
Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, IL

Scott Klag
Retired, formerly Metro, OR

Racheal Ajayi
Formerly MO Dept. of Natural Resources

February 14, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
West Miller Senate Building, Room 2
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 0686, Extended Producer Responsibility for Batteries and Battery-Containing Products

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support** of SB 0686, which will establish a producer funded and managed stewardship program in Maryland for the collection and recycling of used primary, rechargeable, and medium-format batteries – a large majority of the batteries used by consumers today. SB 0686 will build on the State's existing battery recycling laws from the 1990's for mercuric oxide and rechargeable batteries by expanding the scope of covered batteries and making other program improvements based on lessons learned from 30 years of battery EPR implementation in the U.S.

Americans generate more than 3 billion used batteries each year, but just 15% of rechargeable batteries and an even smaller percentage of single-use batteries are recycled. In landfills, batteries can release hazardous materials like mercury and lead into the environment. By ensuring the proper collection and recycling of batteries, SB 0686 will prevent pollution.

Lithium-ion batteries, which are used in a growing number of products, have sparked fires in trucks and at recycling facilities that have caused millions of dollars in damage, worker injuries, and tragic deaths. SB 0686 would ensure sustainable funding for safe collection and recycling processes that reduce the incidence of fires, which increase insurance rates for businesses, especially at MRFs, transfer stations, and other solid waste management facilities.

Batteries also contain valuable materials such as steel, manganese, and zinc that are mined using energy-intensive processes that emit greenhouse gases. SB 0686 will ensure recovery of these valuable resources for use as

feedstock in new batteries and other products, thereby reducing the need for mining and GHG associated emissions. SB 0686 would also benefit battery recyclers and manufacturers by providing a continuous flow of high-quality material that allows for long-term investments in local recycling and manufacturing facilities, thereby creating jobs.

Sustainable funding provided through SB 0686 will also reduce the financial burden on local governments that, in the absence of a stewardship program, would bear the financial and managerial costs of battery management.

SB 0686 contains many of the best practices found in all successful stewardship laws, including:

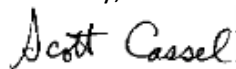
- The requirement to set minimum convenience standards to ensure equal access to the program statewide;
- Performance goals for collection quantities, recycling efficiency, and public awareness;
- Requirements to renew the plan every five years, which allows for improvement based on lessons learned from implementation and to adapt to changes as the program matures;
- Education and outreach requirements;
- Requirement that producers finance the program through cost-internalized mechanisms, rather than consumer fees;
- Annual reporting and transparency;
- Financial compensation to local government collection sites for the cost of collection;
- Funding for the State to oversee and enforce the law;
- Penalties for noncompliance with the law; and
- An eco-modulated fee structure to encourage product design that reduces environmental impacts.

Since 2014, Vermont, the District of Columbia, California, Washington, and Illinois have all enacted battery extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws similar to SB 0686. Recognizing the importance of battery management for pollution prevention, waste reduction, and a circular economy, many other states are pursuing similar legislation.

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national policy expert and consulting nonprofit that pioneered product stewardship in the United States along with our members – hundreds of state and local government officials, including those in Maryland– and our partners from companies, environmental groups, academia, and international governments. Since 2000, PSI's facilitated dialogues, research, pilot projects, and policy models have helped shape most of the 141 EPR laws enacted for 20 industry sectors.

I respectfully urge you to support **SB 0686** for the financial, environmental and safety interests of Maryland's economy and communities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (617) 236-4822, or Scott@ProductStewardship.US.

Sincerely,



Scott Cassel
Chief Executive Officer/Founder