

February 14, 2025

**To: Maryland Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee**

**Re: SB0591: Environment - Covered Electronic Device Recycling Program - Establishment (Electronics Recycling Health and Safety Modernization Act)**

**Favorable**

As current Vice President of Steinert US (SUS), I am writing in support of SB0591. I bring my many years of experience as an equipment supplier in the Waste, Metals, Mining and Glass recycling markets.

Steinert provides a multitude of equipment technologies into various recycling processes to include magnetics and sensor sorting in various markets. This variety in technologies allows Steinert to learn from other markets and bring that knowledge into Waste recycling.

Battery fires at Municipal Recycling Facilities (MRF's) are a major issue with fires happening daily. Currently MRF's experience a small fire almost every day with catastrophic fires happening weekly at MRF's around the country.

Steinert strongly believes that the technology to detect, identify the specific battery threat and remove it from the waste stream already exists. We are also ready to demonstrate how.

We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs in the private sector and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

We thank Senator Augustine for sponsoring this bill and stand in support of this bill.

This bill will take the financial burden off taxpayers and local government, and fully fund both collection sites and recycling operations. It will insulate programs from unpredictable commodity markets, inflation and economic downturns.

It will grow local jobs and increase our domestic supply of rare earth minerals and precious metals for the auto, jewelry, electronics and clean energy industries.

It will allow jurisdictions to divert much needed tax revenues to other critical public sector services, eliminate fees at public collection sites, and expand programs, especially for rural and underserved areas.

Fires have already occurred at County electronics collection sites. We need to protect our essential workers, first responders, and recycling infrastructure. This bill will do that.

It will address the severe human health and safety issues from toxic chemical battery flammable gas, smoke, fire and explosion incidents (which have been fatal, even from inhalation). Battery fire incidents have been exponentially increasing in Maryland and across the country and world. The bill would fund heat spot (thermal imaging), fire and smoke detection, suppression and extinguishing equipment and monitoring and notification systems at electronics collection sites to limit these events and stop thermal runaway when they do occur. These incidents severely impact and endanger site staff, capital infrastructure like MRFs, transfer stations, collection trucks/drivers, other processing equipment, insurance rates (limiting capability to even be insured), in addition to first responders, who continue to receive more and more call outs due to battery fires.

Overall, this is a true shared responsibility model among government, consumers, retailers and producers, with broad support from government, private sector, electronics recyclers, solid waste associations, environmental nonprofits.