

To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: HB0931: Environment - Covered Electronic Device Recycling Program - Establishment (Electronics Recycling Health and Safety Modernization Act)

Favorable

Good afternoon Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Gina Van De Walle, a Recycling Coordinator, here on behalf of Howard County. I have direct experience managing Howard County's electronics recycling contract.

During the past decade, the economics of managing electronics recycling programs have been challenging for local governments, including Howard County. Since 2012, Howard County has recycled nearly 15 million pounds of electronics received at our public drop-off site, costing more than \$1.6 million to do so.

I am also aware that many of my colleagues in other counties have been unable to obtain the funding needed to sustain full electronics programs during the past 10 years, and have been left with no other choice but to landfill these devices. Thus, I am here, not only to ensure Howard County's recycling program is set up for permanent success in the future, but also in solidarity with my colleagues to receive needed funding to reinstate the full programs they once had.

Howard County has already experienced battery related fires in our electronics public drop off area, including two fires in 2024, and six fires on curbside trash and recycling routes. This bill will provide us with thermal imaging, fire detection and 24/7 monitoring technology, as well as suppression equipment to catch these events before they become fires and help us safely extinguish them when they do occur. It will also provide electronic device labeling with recycling information to educate our residents and minimize these Lithium-Ion fires on our curbside collection routes. Lithium-Ion Battery fires are not regular fires, but toxic chemical ones. We want to ensure workers who manage these materials have all the tools necessary to keep themselves safe and protect our recycling infrastructure.

Thus, we ask for your support on HB 0931.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.

Sincerely,

Gina Van De Walle, Recycling Coordinator, Howard County Bureau of Environmental Services