

February 12, 2024

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of the [Association of Plastics Recyclers \(APR\)](#), I am submitting comments as **favorable with amendments for HB 69 - Environment – Plastic Products – Postconsumer Recycled Content Program.**

[The Association of Plastic Recyclers \(APR\)](#) is a US-based non-profit and the only North American organization focused exclusively on improving the recycling of plastics. The APR represents over 90% of the processing capacity for post-consumer plastic packaging—our members include the businesses that recycle most of the plastic packaging after it has been collected and sorted by Maryland's recycling programs. APR understands the challenges facing the industry and the solutions needed to scale recycling effectively as a key solution to reduce plastic pollution and waste and move toward a more sustainable, circular economy.

THIS BILL WILL CREATE STRONGER MARKET DEMAND NEEDED TO HELP EXPAND PLASTICS RECYCLING

APR was the first plastics-related organization to publicly support mandatory recycled content legislation in 2006, and APR continues to champion these policies. Using post-consumer recycled (PCR) content in plastic packaging is [one of the most effective ways to reduce the environmental impact of the packaging](#). This bill will also help build and stabilize manufacturing demand for recycled plastics, which is an essential solution to improving plastics recycling. This stronger market demand helps recyclers to invest in the needed infrastructure to grow plastics recycling, which, in turn, **can help Maryland programs to recycle more volumes and types of plastics.**

Recyclers compete to sell recycled content as a replacement to virgin plastic. It is challenging for recyclers to invest more toward improving and expanding plastics recycling when they must compete against the overproduction and low costs of virgin plastic. This bill is needed to help to shift the economics in favor of recycled plastics, and away from virgin plastics, and transition toward the circularity of plastics.

BOTH DEMAND AND SUPPLY POLICIES ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE PLASTICS RECYCLING

HB 69 addresses the need for stronger manufacturing demand for recycled plastics. **Complementary policies are also necessary to increase the amount of recycled plastics collected from households and businesses.** In short, both supply-side and demand-side policies are needed to improve plastics recycling. Demand-side policies like HB 69 rely upon stronger collection programs to source enough recycled plastics to meet the targets. Supply-side policies also need strong manufacturing demand to ensure recycled plastics are used instead of virgin plastic to make new products and packaging. It is not an either-or, it is a both-and strategy to improve plastics recycling.

Maryland is currently considering HB 232/SB 346, a bottle deposit bill, and SB 901, an EPR for packaging bill, which are both supply-side policies. Passing supply-side policies like these in tandem with HB 69, or amending them to be integrated within one another, will create the most economically and environmentally successful recycling system for Maryland.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

APR will continue to engage with Delegate Terresa on suggested changes to the bill to improve its effectiveness, including:

- Revise targets for rigid food containers to align with other states and current feasibility.
- Expand the scope to include durable products where recycled content can be more readily utilized.
- Update the reference to ISO certifying body to require certification based on the [APR Post Consumer Recycled Content Certification standard](#) or similar certification programs as referenced by law in California and Oregon.
- Establish pathway to integrate with supply-side policies also under consideration by Maryland legislature.

MOVING FORWARD

Thank you for your leadership to improve plastics recycling. APR staff are available at your convenience to discuss these comments and share further technical, regulatory, and policy information upon request. Please contact Allison Kustic, State Government Relations Manager, at allison@plasticsrecycling.org.

Sincerely,

Allison Kustic

Allison Kustic

State Government Relations Manager
The Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR)