



March 5, 2025

To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: HB 858 Mattress Stewardship Program – Establishment

Favorable

As current President of Maryland Recycling Network (MRN), I am writing to provide favorable support of HB 858. I bring my experience managing mattress and box spring recycling contracts at the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority. I am not speaking on behalf of the Authority.

Maryland Recycling Network members include public recycling managers, private sector and non-profit recyclers and individuals who support recycling. We promote sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's") of materials otherwise destined for disposal and the purchase of products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

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 Delegate Hill and others for sponsoring this bill.

I would first like to highlight the early adopters, including the jurisdictions of Baltimore City, Frederick County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Washington County, and most recently Charles County, who have implemented municipal mattress recycling programs in our state. MRN congratulates them on their leadership in this movement, as it is not easy starting up operations for a new program such as this. These programs are successful and give us hope that mattress recycling can be replicated across the entire state.

However, many of them are struggling to keep up with the costs. Since January 2022, five Maryland jurisdictions have spent over \$1,000,000 on these recycling programs, while diverting over 4.2 million pounds of mattresses and box springs from disposal.

Mattress and box spring recycling is a manual labor-intensive process, that also requires costly equipment to further dismantle, process and bale its components. Costs associated with the collection of whole units, demanufacturing, marketing and further downstream transportation and processing, are not fully offset by marginal revenues received from the broken-down commodities. Thus, there will likely always be a net cost associated with mattress and box spring recycling.

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Bulky material such as mattresses and box springs are safety and fire hazards and “pose several challenges for landfills...They don’t compact well, take up a lot of space, create flammable air pockets, and the springs tend to get tangled in [expensive] ...bulldozer compacting equipment, often damaging it,” delaying solid waste operating activities due to costly repairs [[Cascade Alliance, The State of the Mattress Recycling Industry, Third Edition, February 2017](#)].

[Now, Maryland has 21 years left of landfill capacity. There is an urgent need to ramp up recycling.](#)

HB 858 is critical to supporting mattress recycling programs by taking this financial burden off local government and the public. It will allow jurisdictions to divert much needed tax revenues to other public sector services. It will eliminate fees at collection sites and disincentivize these materials from ending up illegally dumped or in the disposal stream (which is currently the least expensive solid waste management choice for many, if not all entities, commercial and residential sectors included).

This funding will grow local jobs and support current mattress recycling contracts run by local jurisdictions, while also supporting the expansion of new contracts for local jurisdictions that have had no funding available to kickstart this specific recycling program, especially in rural and underserved areas.

According to the Mattress Recycling Council, a [recent analysis](#) of the California program’s environmental footprint from collection to recycling shows that “every mattress recycled saves 500 gallons of water, enough energy to power the average household for three days and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equivalent to driving 60 fewer miles.”

Existing commodity markets in Maryland for mattress and box spring components include those for metal, foam and quilted ticking, about 85% of materials from all end-of-life units. [According to the Mattress Recycling Council](#), “steel mattress springs are sold as scrap metal...and mattress foam is mostly recycled into carpet padding.” This bill would support the ability for recyclers to scale up and build stable downstream recycling markets for other mattress commodities such as wood, cotton, fabrics, felt and coconut fiber materials.

The steel springs from our mattresses could very well contribute to the reconstruction of the former Francis Scott Key Bridge.

Maryland already has a consumer fee for tire and paint recycling. This bill complements those programs, ensuring difficult material is responsibly managed.

We thank you for your consideration and ask for a favorable report on HB 858 Mattress Stewardship Program.

Sincerely,



Kitty McIlroy
President
Maryland Recycling Network

The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact MRN via email phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

Attachment

Mattress and Box Spring Recycling Pounds				
	CY 2022	CY 2023	CY 2024	Total
Baltimore City [^]	N/A	N/A	20,600	20,600
Frederick County*	N/A	139,460	299,580	439,040
Howard County**	433,760	198,000	171,280	803,040
Montgomery County***	N/A	500,440	1,965,320	2,465,760
Washington County****	47,600	234,640	254,300	536,540
Total	481,360	1,072,540	2,711,080	4,264,980
Sources: Local Jurisdiction and Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority Data				
*Frederick County's program initiated in July 2023				
**Howard County's program performed all of CY 2022 and CY 2023				
***Montgomery County's program initiated in May 2023				
****Washington County's program initiated in November 2022				
[^] Baltimore City's program initiated in July 2024 (July and September 2024 pounds recycled are unknown).				
Baltimore City's program is still scaling up.				

Mattress and Box Spring Recycling Costs to Jurisdictions				
	CY 2022	CY 2023	CY 2024	Total
Baltimore City [^]	N/A	N/A	\$18,900.00	\$18,900.00
Frederick County*	N/A	\$52,297.50	\$112,342.50	\$164,640.00
Howard County**	\$26,500.00	\$16,000.00	\$13,500.00	\$56,000.00
Montgomery County***	N/A	\$149,865.30	\$464,536.80	\$614,402.10
Washington County****	\$19,813.92	\$98,944.56	\$109,032.20	\$227,790.68
Total	\$46,313.92	\$317,107.36	\$718,311.50	\$1,081,732.78
Sources: Local Jurisdiction and Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority Data				
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