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HB 858

March 05, 2025

TO: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 858 - Environment and Transportation - Mattress Stewardship Program - Establishment

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee, please be advised the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** for House Bill (HB) 858.

HB 858 aims to establish a Mattress Stewardship Program to manage mattress disposal and recycling. The bill requires mattress producers, or their representative organizations, to submit a plan to the Department of the Environment detailing the establishment of a Mattress Stewardship Program. The program would outline methods for mattress collection, transportation, recycling, and disposal, ensuring environmentally sound management practices. The bill also prohibits disposing of mattresses in landfills or incinerators, with certain exceptions.

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) has been facing significant challenges related to mattress disposal at the Quarantine Road Landfill (QRL). The improper disposal of mattresses has led to persistent leachate issues, requiring extensive remediation efforts that cost the City approximately \$70,000 in 2023 alone. Additionally, due to their low weight-to-volume ratio, mattresses fail to generate sufficient revenue through tipping fees, further straining landfill operations.

Currently, the City bears the financial burden of collecting and disposing of mattresses, which is a significant part of the waste collected by our Solid Waste crews. Posing an eyesore in our alleys and sidewalks, impacting the quality of life of our residents, illegal mattress dumping is also a widespread issue, requiring time and labor from both DPW and the Department of Housing and Community Development. While DPW has implemented measures to limit commercial mattress disposal at QRL and launched a mattress recycling pilot program, these efforts come at a high cost to taxpayers—\$21,600 to date, with an anticipated three-year cost exceeding \$650,886. The landfill has an estimated three to five years of operational life remaining, and every effort to divert mattresses from disposal helps preserve this critical space.

HB 858 would support and expand local efforts by creating a producer responsibility stewardship program that ensures mattress recycling while alleviating the financial burden on the City and other jurisdictions. The City believes that a Mattress Stewardship Program could be the opportunity to significantly advance recycling efforts and place the cost for end-of-life mattress disposal with manufacturers and retailers.

It is for these reasons that the Baltimore City Administration requests a **favorable** report on HB 858.