



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

DATE: February 24, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

BILL: SB 655

On behalf of the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the 157 incorporated municipalities we represent, I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 655, the Electronic Device Producer Responsibility Program. I wish to share both the promise of this legislation and the lived realities of Maryland's municipalities in navigating the challenges and opportunities of responsible electronic device waste management.

For years, our cities and towns have stood at the intersection of technological advancement and environmental stewardship. As households and institutions have adopted and subsequently discarded a wide array of electronic devices, from computers and televisions to routers, printers, and tablets, municipal governments have repeatedly found themselves as the final guardians of environmental best practices. Unfortunately, the burden of managing the ever-growing tide of electronic waste, or "e-waste," has often fallen most heavily on our local governments, who must do so with finite resources, inconsistent funding, and a patchwork regulatory framework.

The experience has not been without its trials. Under the prior system, municipalities faced an often inconsistent and uneven landscape: takeback programs varied by manufacturer, available public collection sites waxed and waned, and the scope of covered devices was constantly evolving. Residents, seeking to do the right thing, frequently encountered confusion regarding where, how, and if they could responsibly recycle their electronics. Municipalities, in turn, bore not only the administrative and operational stress of filling gaps left by an incomplete statewide program, but also the very real environmental risks, illegal dumping, improper disposal, and cascading problems at our landfills and recycling facilities.

At the same time, our localities have been creative and resilient. Many have innovated new community collection events, partnered with nonprofits, and engaged in costly public information campaigns, all in service of environmental best practices. Municipal officials have worked tirelessly to educate the public, remediate sites contaminated by dumped electronics, and maintain a social contract of responsible stewardship in the absence of a robust statewide infrastructure. Yet, the back and forth between municipal best intentions and structural limitations has taken its toll.

MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.

SB655 marks a pivotal turning point. By instituting a producer responsibility framework, this legislation rightfully shifts the principal burden of collection, transportation, and recycling of electronics from municipalities and taxpayers to the companies whose devices are sold in our state. Through the creation of Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) and a mandatory, statewide program, Maryland can ensure all manufacturers either participate in or fund effective e-waste management. No longer will our municipalities have to negotiate separately with manufacturers or scramble to inform residents of eligibility or exceptions; program services will be equitable and consistent for every city and town across the state.

The bill's requirements, for a comprehensive statewide collection network, for multilingual and ADA-compliant consumer education, for annual plan submissions and measurable goals, and for close consultation with both the Department of the Environment and local governments, respond to many of the tribulations municipalities have faced. The explicit inclusion of municipalities in the advisory council, the mandate for fair financial compensation for local collection sites, and the focus on public awareness, especially in underserved and rural communities, help rectify long-standing obstacles. Further, the program's built-in accountability, regular reporting, opportunities for continuous improvement, and oversight for both manufacturers and PROs, ensures that our communities are not left to bear the cost when goals are missed.

We have experienced, first-hand, the consequences of underfunded and piecemeal takeback systems: hazardous materials in the waste stream, public confusion, cost-shifting, and environmental harm. But we have also witnessed the power of coordinated action when given the right tools. As proposed, SB655 puts Maryland at the forefront of sensible, sustainable electronics management. It reduces unnecessary burdens on municipalities, addresses social equity, increases convenience for residents, and ensures producers are accountable for the complete lifecycle of their products.

The Maryland Municipal League believes SB655 is not simply a regulatory reform, but an investment in healthier communities, smarter government, and environmental responsibility. We urge the legislature to support this measure, ending the frustrating back-and-forth and launching a new era of partnership between state, local governments, producers, and the people we all serve. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

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