

## **MD HB 796: Stephen Goff Testimony**

Good afternoon. My name is Steve Goff. I hold a Master's degree in Chemical Engineering and have spent much of my career leading the development and evaluation of technologies that recover value from waste. I now work as an independent technical consultant focused on advanced recycling and circularity projects, including collaborations with universities and researchers working to improve how materials are managed at their end-of-life. This consulting includes previous work with Johns Hopkins University on their innovative research on the catalytic upcycling of waste plastics into chemical feedstocks for the production of new plastics.

The processes defined in HB 796 as "chemical conversion" are a category of well-understood technologies which are currently being developed for their ability to convert used plastics into valuable new materials. While each of the processes are unique, they share the ability to use heat, water or catalysts in highly controlled vessels to turn hard-to-recycle plastic materials into valuable new materials for use in our daily lives. This means we can capture value from materials otherwise destined to landfills or incineration, while in many cases also helping to reduce our carbon footprint.

It is also important to recognize that these facilities must operate under stringent state and federal regulations, making them among the most regulated sectors of industry. So environmental concerns will be addressed in the permitting process, and closely monitored by the State for the life of the project.

Advanced technologies are an essential compliment to waste reduction strategies, alongside waste minimization and mechanical recycling. These technologies can help Maryland business generate economic value from waste, while avoiding landfill and incineration outcomes. Moreover, they will be of tremendous help in delivering on the Maryland Department of the Environment's overall waste management strategy, and in meeting the packaging circularity and recovery goals of the recently adopted EPR program.

Achieving a circular economy requires a comprehensive approach that includes a strategy for sustainably managing essential but non-recyclable plastics used in Maryland's leading health care, manufacturing, shipping and agricultural sectors.

These technologies are designed to reduce environmental waste and keep plastic out of landfills. Restricting recycling innovations would directly counter that goal. We need all technologies on the table if we want to decrease the amount of waste in the environment while generating new feedstocks and materials that increasingly decouple our reliance on virgin fossil resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.