

## **Testimony on House Bill 0992 Electronic Device Producer Responsibility Program Position: Favorable With Amendments**

Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is The Honorable Dr. Cashenna A. Cross. I submit this testimony as a municipal leader, a retired United States Air Force veteran, and a public servant committed to transparency, environmental stewardship, and responsible governance that protects both communities and taxpayers.

House Bill 0992 presents an important opportunity for Maryland to modernize how electronic waste is managed across our State. The rapid growth of consumer technology has created a parallel growth in discarded electronic devices. These materials contain components that, if improperly handled, create environmental risks, public health concerns, and long-term financial burdens for local jurisdictions.

The core concept of producer responsibility is sound. Shifting the lifecycle responsibility of electronic devices toward manufacturers encourages innovation, reduces landfill pressure, and aligns financial accountability with those best positioned to design sustainable systems. From a municipal perspective, this approach has the potential to relieve local governments from absorbing costs that were never intended to fall on taxpayers.

However, while the intent of the bill is strong, several implementation concerns must be addressed to ensure successful execution without unintended consequences for municipalities, small jurisdictions, and underserved communities.

First, municipalities must not inherit indirect administrative or operational burdens. Local governments often become the default coordinators of state programs when operational gaps emerge. The legislation should clearly state that participation by municipalities is voluntary and that no unfunded mandates may be imposed through regulation or program design.

Second, equitable access must be strengthened. While statewide collection targets are established, additional safeguards are needed to ensure smaller municipalities and historically underserved communities receive consistent and convenient service. Environmental justice must be measured not only by policy language but by actual accessibility on the ground.

Third, transparency and accountability mechanisms should be enhanced. Producer responsibility organizations must provide clear reporting accessible to local governments and residents, including collection performance, compliance status, and measurable program outcomes. Government credibility depends on the public's ability to see results and understand how decisions affect their communities.

Fourth, coordination with existing municipal recycling systems must be explicitly protected. Local recycling programs have invested resources and built trusted community relationships. The State should ensure integration rather than disruption of systems already serving residents.

My support for this legislation reflects a belief that good governance requires ownership of policy outcomes. Environmental progress and fiscal responsibility are not competing priorities. They are complementary when programs are structured with clarity, fairness, and accountability.

With the recommended amendments addressing municipal protections, equitable implementation, and transparent oversight, House Bill 0992 can become a model policy that advances sustainability while respecting local governance and taxpayer responsibility.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to policies that move Maryland forward responsibly.

Respectfully submitted,

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United States Air Force Veteran Maryland Municipal Leader