



## **HB0796**

### **Recycling - Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic**

#### **Testimony before Environment and Transportation**

**Hearing February 25, 2026**

**Position: Favorable**

Dear Chair Korman and Vice-Chair Guyton, and members of the committee, my name is Shantanu Ghosh, and I am representing Indivisible Howard County on behalf of its 1700+ members. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of HB0796**, which would change the definition of recycling to exclude certain chemical conversion processes (such as pyrolysis, hydrolysis, methanolysis, gasification, enzymatic breakdown, or other similar processes) as determined by the Department of the Environment. This bill also prohibits construction of new facilities that convert plastic to fuel or feedstock through a chemical conversion process. We thank Delegate Terrasa for introducing this bill.

Maryland has long supported recycling as a strategy to conserve resources, reduce landfill use, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. For recycling systems to function effectively, however, the definition of “recycling” must remain clear and credible. Traditional recycling refers to the recovery and reprocessing of materials into new products. By contrast, many chemical conversion processes—such as pyrolysis and gasification—convert plastic into fuels that are ultimately combusted. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, combustion with energy recovery is categorized separately from recycling in federal waste management hierarchy guidance.<sup>1</sup> Maintaining that distinction in Maryland law preserves transparency for residents and ensures that recycling continues to mean material recovery rather than energy production.

In addition, plastic-to-fuel facilities have raised environmental and public health concerns in other states. Analyses of proposed and operating chemical conversion facilities have documented hazardous waste generation and air emissions associated with these operations.<sup>2</sup> Allowing these processes to be classified as recycling could create regulatory ambiguity and incentivize facilities that function more like waste-to-energy operations than material recovery systems. HB0796 appropriately clarifies Maryland’s recycling standards and prohibits the construction of new plastic-to-fuel facilities, ensuring that environmental policy remains aligned with waste reduction, resource conservation, and community health protections.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Shantanu Ghosh  
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*Sources Cited:*

1. U.S. Evtl. Prot. Agency, **Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts and Figures 2018** (2020),  
<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/advancing-sustainable-materials-management-facts-and-figures>.
2. Natural Res. Def. Council, **Chemical Recycling of Plastics Is Not Recycling** (2021),  
<https://www.nrdc.org/resources/chemical-recycling-plastic-greenwashing-incineration>.