



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

House Bill 796

Recycling – Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic

Position: Informational
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Date: February 25, 2026
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers the following **INFORMATIONAL** testimony on HB 796.

Bill Summary

HB 796 would alter the definition of “recycling” to exclude certain processes, including pyrolysis, hydrolysis, methanolysis, gasification, enzymatic breakdown, or similar processes as determined by MDE. HB 796 would also prohibit the construction of a facility in Maryland that would convert plastic to fuel or feedstock through any of the aforementioned processes.

Position Rationale

The definition of “recycling,” in Environmental Article § 9-1701 is central to Maryland’s waste diversion laws and programs. HB 796, as introduced, would establish a blanket exclusion from the definition of recycling for a number of processes that are used in the recycling of materials such as textiles, natural wood waste, aluminum, and organics (i.e. food residuals), in addition to the processing of plastic for secondary markets. Therefore, as currently drafted, the broad changes proposed by the legislation could adversely affect the practice and measurement of recycling and waste diversion efforts in the State. MDE would also need to expend additional resources to develop education, change data collection practices, and revise databases.

MDE respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations on HB 796 and is available for questions.

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