

Committee: Environment and Transportation**Testimony: HB109 “Task Force on Recycling Policy and Recycling and Waste Systems in Maryland”****Position: Support****Hearing Date: February 22, 2023**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB109. This bill would create a Task Force of diverse stakeholders to review the Maryland Recycling Act (MRA), study the recycling and waste systems in Maryland, and make recommendations on updating the MRA and the feasibility of regional recycling and waste disposal facilities. The Task Force must report its findings and recommendations by June 30, 2024.

To make meaningful reductions in waste, conserve resources, and increase recycling and composting, we need a comprehensive, up-to-date review of the waste stream and diversion possibilities. The MRA, enacted in 1988, provided a foundation for building Maryland’s recycling and diversion systems. Its regulations have been updated incrementally, but the time has come for a more comprehensive review. In the 35 years since its passage, our waste stream has changed markedly both in types of waste and volume.

- There’s been exponential growth of consumer and industrial plastic waste with few recycling alternatives and an increased imperative to divert organic matter from landfills to reduce methane emissions.
- Sophisticated and varied batteries containing valuable rare earth materials necessary for industry and national security have proliferated.¹ Industry is increasingly looking at post-consumer waste to meet demand for metals.²
- Waste reduction has become an even greater imperative; in addition, new processes for treatment of waste have arisen, opening new opportunities for waste diversion and cost savings.
- Maryland is facing increased costs for recycling and disposal; shrinking capacity in existing landfills; and rising concern about the toxicity of products and implications for their recycling and incineration.
- In 2012, the State set a voluntary waste diversion goal of 60% by 2020, but Maryland’s actual diversion rate was only 42.25% that year.³

The Task Force will be able to build on the findings of the summer 2020 Environment and Transportation committee Work Group on Waste Reduction and Recycling. We appreciate that HB 109 incorporates greater representation by counties; participation of environmental groups; a review of recycling and waste

¹Mollice, A., *et al.* 2023. “U.S. Car Makers’ EV Plans Hinge on Made in America Batteries,” *The Wall Street Journal*, February 6. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-car-makers-ev-plans-hinge-on-made-in-america-batteries-11675640784>)

²Spherical Insights.2022. “Aluminum Scrap Recycling Market is Projected to reach USD 25.12 Billion by 2030, Growing at a CAGR of 8.16%. *Global News Wire*, November 11. <https://www.globenewswire.com/en/news-release/2022/11/11/2554375/0/en/Aluminum-Scrap-Recycling-Market-Size-is-projected-to-reach-USD-25-12-Billion-by-2030-growing-at-a-CAGR-of-8-16-Spherical-Insights>.

³ The 42.25% diversion rate is the sum of the 38.22% recycling rate and a 4.03% source reduction credit. (MDE. *Maryland Solid Waste Management and Diversion Report, 2021 (CY2020 data, p. 2.)*

systems in Maryland; adoption of the principle of zero waste as a criterion in assessing the feasibility of regional recycling and waste disposal facilities; and a realistic timeline for the Task Force to deliver its findings and recommendations. For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on HB109.

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