



Maryland Chapter
P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Economic Matters
Testimony on: HB 91 – “Environment-Recycling – Hotels”
Position: Support with Amendments
Hearing Date: February 8, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 91, a bill that requires hotels to offer recycling opportunities to guests and staff and assures that certain materials are collected as required by the county in which the hotel is located. This bill will enhance waste diversion from incinerators and landfills and help Maryland achieve its recycling goals.

For decades, many Americans have sorted their residential waste by separating recyclables from trash every week. However, conscientious travelers often don't have the same opportunity when staying in lodgings away from home, nor are they necessarily aware of what can be recycled in jurisdictions outside their own. Under HB91, guests in Maryland hotels would be able to recycle recyclable materials while away from home – estimated to be 1-2 pounds of waste per room per night.¹ This is a significant amount, considering that Maryland hosted about 20 million overnight travelers in 2019 and is on track to return that volume in 2023.²

According to the 2014 Maryland Department of the Environment Zero Waste Plan, the 2020 overall recycling goal of 60% was recommended to meet greenhouse gas reduction mandates.³ Unfortunately, Maryland is falling well short of that goal. In 2019, residents and businesses recycled only 40.5% of municipal solid waste.⁴ This bill is likely to increase the state's recycling rate by adding the recyclable waste of Maryland's hotels and millions of overnight hotel guests.

We propose two amendments to improve the implementation of the bill. First, we recommend defining “hotel” to include all lodging establishments, including inns, lodges, motels, and all other businesses that provide overnight accommodations to paying guests. Second, the bill should require that signage next to or on recycling receptacles display the types of materials accepted; travelers are often unaware of what is locally recyclable. This will expand coverage of the bill and reduce contamination of the recycling stream by unknowing travelers.

We urge a favorable report on HB91 and adoption of the proposed strengthening amendments.

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¹ Guests generate 1.7 - 3.2 lb of waste per room per night, depending on whether an economy or high-class room, of which 60% is recyclable: <https://productreviewcafe.com/how-much-waste-is-generated-by-hotels/>

²https://www.visitmaryland.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-in-Maryland-2021_0.pdf

³https://mde.state.md.us/programs/Marylander/Documents/Zero_Waste_Plan_Draft_12.15.14.pdf

⁴<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Land/Documents/MSWMR%20%2720.pdf>

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.