

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1103 (Delegate Wivell)  
Environment and Transportation

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**Task Force to Study Recycling and the Processing of Solid Waste**

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This bill establishes the Task Force to Study Recycling and the Processing of Solid Waste. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) must provide staff for the task force. Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses. The bill (1) establishes topics the task force must examine in conducting the required study and (2) requires the task force to make recommendations for a path forward regarding recycling and waste processing in the State, as specified. By December 31, 2021, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2021, and terminates May 31, 2022.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MDE are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. However, MDE advises that completing the work of the task force and submitting the required report by the December 31, 2021 deadline may be difficult. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Any costs for local governments to participate in the task force are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources. Local revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The task force must study recycling and the new technologies available for the processing of municipal solid waste for purposes of reducing the amount of solid waste being landfilled. In conducting the study, the task force must examine the following topics: (1) the feasibility of a regional approach to the processing of municipal solid waste across the State; (2) the development and implementation of emerging technologies for processing municipal solid waste; (3) the reuse of abandoned facilities within the State that might be suitable for waste diversion; and (4) the development of incentives for public-private partnerships, private industry, or public entities to process municipal solid waste into recyclable products or expand or establish markets for recyclable products.

The task force must make recommendations for a path forward regarding recycling and waste processing in the State that incorporates any combination of the topics listed above. The recommendations must (1) consider the need for facilities; (2) consider the viability for the operation of facilities; (3) identify available funding sources; and (4) identify whether new funding sources should be proposed.

**Current Law:** The solid waste infrastructure in Maryland consists of both permitted and nonpermitted facilities, and solid waste is managed through a combination of recycling, composting, landfilling, energy recovery, and exporting for disposal or recycling.

### *Maryland Recycling Act*

Maryland's recycling policy is guided by the Maryland Recycling Act, which sets mandatory recycling rates for State government and local jurisdictions, as well as a voluntary statewide waste diversion goal of 60% and a voluntary statewide recycling goal of 55% by 2020. Each county (including Baltimore City) must prepare a recycling plan that addresses how the jurisdiction will achieve its mandatory recycling rate. The plan must be submitted to MDE's Office of Recycling for approval when the jurisdiction submits its water and sewerage plan at least every 10 years. At least every 2 years, each county must also submit a progress report to MDE, which must include any revision of or amendment to the county plan that has been adopted.

MDE's Office of Recycling submits annual reports, in coordination with the Maryland Environmental Service (MES), to the Governor and the General Assembly on specified information related to recycling in Maryland. Beginning in 2009, MDE has combined the *Maryland Waste Diversion Activities Report* and the *Solid Waste Managed in Maryland Report* into one report, the *Maryland Solid Waste Management and Diversion Report*.

## *Regional Waste Management Partnerships in the State*

There are several examples of regional waste management partnerships in the State. The Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority (NMWDA) and the Midshore Regional Solid Waste Partnership, which is operated by MES, both assist multiple local jurisdictions with their waste management needs.

Chapter 871 of 1980 established NMWDA and codified the General Assembly's statement of purpose regarding NMWDA. This statement includes the mission for NMWDA to improve health and living conditions in the State through the efficient collection and disposal of waste on a regional basis and the generation of energy and recovery of useable resources from such waste to the extent practicable. NMWDA assists member jurisdictions with the planning and development of waste management and waste-to-energy systems by serving as a regional coordinating agency and a financing vehicle for facilities. Member jurisdictions include Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery counties and Baltimore City.

MES was established by the General Assembly in 1970 as an instrumentality of the State and a self-supporting, not-for-profit public corporation that serves State, local, and federal agencies and the private sector through designing, planning, financing, constructing, operating, and monitoring projects for water and wastewater treatment, solid waste management, composting, recycling, dredged material management, hazardous materials cleanup, stormwater services, and renewable energy. Among other things, MES operates the Midshore Regional Solid Waste Partnership, which consists of four planned facilities that serve the solid waste needs of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties. Under the partnership, each county hosts the municipal landfill for 20 years. MES owns the facilities and is responsible for all permitting, design, construction, operational, and post-closure requirements.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of Legislative Services

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