



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

March 4, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 1452 - Department of the Environment – Office of Recycling – Recycling Market Development

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed House Bill 1452 entitled *Department of the Environment – Office of Recycling – Recycling Market Development*. We would like to express our support for the proposed legislation.

This bill would require MDE's Office of Recycling to promote the development of markets for recycled materials and recycled products in the state. The bill lays out a number of tasks to serve that purpose, including researching and evaluating available and potential markets for recyclable materials, types and quantities of recyclable materials generated in Maryland, opportunities for businesses in Maryland to use recycled materials, and existing funding mechanisms for recycling market development. The bill would also require MDE to collect information from and conduct outreach to a number of external entities, including businesses to promote a "Maryland is open for recycling business" campaign and state and local agencies and private organizations to coordinate market development activities. Finally, MDE would be required to report annually to the General Assembly on recycling market development activities conducted under the bill.

Achieving more recycling and waste avoidance requires the participation of State and local governments, businesses, and individuals. To this end, Governor Hogan signed Executive Order 01.01.2017.13, Resource Recovery Plan for Maryland, reaffirming Maryland's commitment to waste reduction and recycling by emphasizing collaboration across State and local agencies, the private recycling sector, and citizens to establish and make meaningful progress towards waste diversion goals. The executive order also focuses on sustainable materials management. Sustainable materials management calls for reducing the environmental impact of the materials we manufacture, purchase, use, and manage throughout their entire lifecycle.

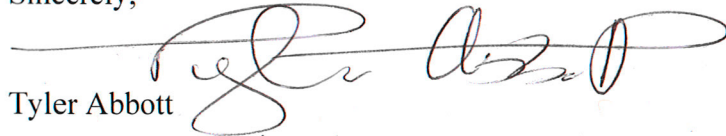
Strong markets for recyclable materials are critical to the success of recycling programs. While it is not always readily apparent to consumers, there are real costs involved in collecting, sorting, and processing recyclables for return to the market. Strong markets ensure that there is a reliable, sustainable source of funding to cover these costs and keep recycling programs running. Beginning in

2017, China announced a series of actions that limited the import of recyclable materials from abroad, including the U.S. These actions included tighter quality standards and outright bans on certain materials. These changes, along with resulting changes in other overseas markets, led to decreased markets for certain recyclables. In Maryland, some local governments and private recyclers reported significantly increased net costs for recycling programs as a result.

While the recent market issues pose significant challenges for local recycling programs in Maryland and elsewhere, there are positive developments as well. Many local governments and MDE have renewed outreach to consumers to recycle correctly, in an effort to reduce contaminants in the recycling stream and improve the value of recyclables. Additionally, there is projected growth in domestic processing capacity in the U.S., particularly for paper and plastic. The proposed legislation would call on MDE to work with state, local, and private stakeholders to promote and develop local markets for recyclables. This represents a small but important step toward focusing and coordinating State recycling efforts on long-term economic and environmental sustainability.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor House Bill 1452 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott", written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Dana Stein
Ms. Kaley Laleker, Director, Land and Materials Administration