

BILL: HB36

POSITION: FAV

DATE: February 6, 2021

FROM: Phil Harris, Division Director of Solid Waste & Recycling, Frederick County

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

We write on behalf of our municipalities to express our support for [HB 36](#), a bill to establish producer responsibility in Maryland. Under the current system, we bear the burden of managing huge amounts of waste and recycling, much of which is created by producers who do not consider the end of life of their materials.

The Problem

When China and other countries [restricted](#) plastic imports, the market for materials like paper and plastics shrunk overnight. This has resulted in higher costs for local governments, many of whom were already in a challenging financial situation. Between 2017 and 2019, the value of [recyclables have declined an average of 41%](#). A market where local governments and taxpayers bear all of the cost of managing recycling and waste from materials like plastic and paper packaging is unsustainable.

The Solution

Producer responsibility legislation ensures that producers bear partial financial responsibility for end of life management of the products that they create, [providing financial relief to Maryland's local governments](#). In addition, this bill calls on producers to help local governments advance their recycling systems to keep up with rapidly changing materials that existing infrastructure may not be able to handle. This has implications for taxpayers as well. [A recent review](#) of a proposed producer responsibility law showed that "EPR [for packaging and paper products] in Washington would save between \$90 to \$121 per household per year and create between 1,650 and 2,600 new, local jobs in the state."

[The study in Washington](#) also found that producer responsibility for packaging and paper products could achieve [significant waste diversion](#), including a 20% reduction in landfilled packaging and paper products. The increased recycling generated by this producer responsibility legislation would remove the CO2 equivalent of "between 120,000 to 138,000 vehicles from the road every year." Further, despite our best efforts, Maryland's plastic recycling rate in 2017 was only [13%](#). Research shows that producer responsibility can help us achieve a much higher recycling rate. EPR for packaging and paper would help us meet our environmental sustainability goals here in Maryland, and create a more sustainable financial future for our local governments.

It's time for producer responsibility in Maryland.

We must require the creators of packaging to provide relief to local governments and taxpayers - who had no say in the packaging they were handed - in managing it. This legislation will free up resources so that we can provide the services our citizens demand and deserve. With its potential to provide financial relief to local governments, create jobs, increase recycling, and reduce emissions, we respectfully request that you vote favorably on HB 36.

Phil Harris
Division Director of Solid Waste & Recycling
Frederick County
pharris@frederickcountymd.gov