

**HOUSE BILL 164 SUPPORT
“DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT – OFFICE OF RECYCLING
- RECYCLING MARKET DEVELOPMENT”
HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
JANUARY 15, 2021**

**CHAZ MILLER
MARYLAND RECYCLING NETWORK
SUPPORT**

Good afternoon. I am Chaz Miller. I am speaking on behalf of the Maryland Recycling Network (MRN). Our members are city and county recycling coordinators, recycling companies, non-profit organizations and recycling advocates. We promote sustainable reduction, reuse, and recycling. We educate, advocate and provide technical assistance. One of our most important goals is to develop markets that will buy Maryland’s recyclables and turn them into new products.

House Bill 146, introduced by Environment and Transportation Committee Vice Chair Dana Stein and by Brooke Lierman, creates a recycling market development program led by the Department of the Environment (MDE). This bill is fully consistent with the MRN’s goals and we strongly support this legislation.

Long-term raw material markets are essential for the success of curbside recycling programs. Those materials should be sold to an end market and turned into new products. Without end markets, they will be sent to disposal. The good news is that most of the time our recyclables are sold to end markets.

The bad news is that in 2018, the Chinese government began banning imports of recyclables. They started with mixed paper and mixed plastics. Before 2018, Chinese paper mills bought about 28 percent of the paper collected for recycling in this country

and a significant percentage of mixed plastics. The Chinese action resulted in a major drop in the value of recyclables, with paper losing the most value. The final ban on corrugated containers (popularly known as cardboard boxes) went into effect on January 1 of this year. The Chinese action emphasized the need to increase domestic capacity to use our recyclables as a raw material.

HB 164 establishes MDE as the lead agency for this effort. MDE will coordinate with the Departments of Commerce, General Services, and Transportation, the Maryland Environmental Service, the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, local governments and private organizations in expanding markets for recycled materials and recycled products. The bill requires MDE to

- evaluate current markets and make recommendations to improve them,
- target markets that need development,
- encourage existing businesses to use more recycled materials,
- examine funding mechanisms,
- develop an advertising campaign to attract new recycling businesses,
- and provide technical support.

Maryland has been a national leader in “buy recycled” efforts since 1977. It is time for Maryland to become a national leader in recycling market development. We can join states such as California, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Washington, in expanding recycling markets. Their efforts have expanded recycling manufacturing capacity and created new jobs. HB 164 lets manufacturers know that “Maryland is Open for Recycling Businesses.”

HB 164 encourages Maryland businesses to use recyclable materials and expands current state efforts to encourage state agencies and other organizations to become an important end market for materials by purchasing and using recycled products.

Recycling creates jobs. Recycling reduces the use of raw materials and lowers greenhouse gas generation. Recycling reduces energy use and lowers the need for disposal options. Market development should be a centerpiece of Maryland's efforts to increase recycling.

The Maryland Recycling Network is ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact Peter Houstle, Executive Director, via email phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301- 725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or need additional information.

We look forward to working with you to improve recycling in Maryland.