



Maryland

Department of the Environment

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

Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

February 24, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 650 – Workgroup to Evaluate the Establishment of a Regional Waste Disposal Facility

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed Senate Bill 650 entitled *Workgroup to Evaluate the Establishment of a Regional Waste Disposal Facility* and would like to provide the Committee with some information regarding this bill.

Senate Bill 650, through uncodified language, would require MDE to convene a workgroup to evaluate the establishment of a regional waste disposal facility to serve Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, and Howard County. On or before December 1, 2021, the workgroup would be required to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly. The report would be required to include various proposals, including for the siting of a regional facility and for sharing costs associated with the facility. The proposals must consider certain factors, including modern technology, consolidation needs, phasing out incineration, recycling, reuse, composting, and the principles of zero waste.

MDE is responsible for overseeing counties' overall solid waste and recycling planning through the review of 10-year solid waste management plans (SWMPs). Among other things, SWMPs require counties to evaluate needs for waste disposal and identify the facilities that will be used to meet those needs. The Maryland Recycling Act requires the counties to meet plan for and meet minimum recycling rates of 20 or 35 percent, depending on population. While these broad requirements are overseen at the state level, individual counties determine how they will provide for solid waste disposal and recycling according to local needs.

MDE is supportive of cooperative and creative means of providing for environmentally responsible disposal and recycling. Several examples of regional cooperation exist. Baltimore and Harford Counties have an existing agreement in which some of Harford County's waste is processed through the transfer facility at the Baltimore County Eastern Sanitary Landfill Solid Waste Management Facility. The Maryland Environmental Service (MES) operates the Midshore Regional Solid Waste System that serves the solid waste disposal and recycling needs of Talbot, Caroline, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties. The Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority (NMWDA) assists Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery Counties and Baltimore City 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.

Under the proposed legislation, MDE is required to convene the workgroup, but is not listed as a workgroup member. For this reason, and because MDE does not have extensive experience or expertise in siting or funding disposal and recycling facilities, it would staff the workgroup and rely heavily on expertise and input of the members in compiling the workgroup's report. MES and NMWDA, both workgroup members, would more typically assist counties in developing, financing, and operating disposal and recycling facilities. Because MDE does not have a funding stream to engage a contractor for this purpose, it is assumed that the workgroup and the report would be handled by MDE and the workgroup members with existing resources.

The bill would take effect July 1, 2021 and the report is due on or before December 1, 2021. It would be difficult to convene the workgroup and thoroughly consider and make the required proposals in a period of five months. Additionally, there are several bills currently before the General Assembly that create workgroups and task forces to examine various aspects of solid waste and recycling. House Bill 1103 would create a task force to study and report, by December 31, 2021, on topics related to recycling and processing of solid waste, including the feasibility of a regional approach. House Bill 807 would create a task force to review and update the Maryland Recycling Act, with a report due December 1, 2021. Because the timelines, and to some extent the topics, of these studies overlap, it may be preferable to combine these into a single effort, streamline the scope, and extend the timeline for completion through at least July 1, 2022.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor Senate Bill 650 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", with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier
Ms. Kaley Laleker, Director, Land and Materials Administration