

TESTIMONY BY RICHARD KELLER, ACTING RECYCLING AND WASTE PREVENTION MANAGER, BALTIMORE COUNTY, ON HOUSE BILL 164

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

I am Richard Keller, Acting Recycling and Waste Prevention Manager in the Recycling Division, Bureau of Solid Waste Management, Department of Public Works.

Baltimore County supports House Bill 164, on recycling market development. The bill would create a recycling market development program led by the Department of the Environment. The Department would coordinate the program with the Departments of Commerce, General Services, and Transportation, the Maryland Environmental Service, the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, local governments, and private organizations.

County Executive Olszewski has championed the fight for a sustainable future and has worked to make Baltimore County a leader in environmental protection and sustainability. Baltimore County supports efforts at the state level to limit the environmental effects of waste disposal and to extend our existing landfill space.

Recycling's success depends on stable, long-term markets for materials. Recycling does not occur until a manufacturer uses recyclable material to make a new product and someone uses that recycled content product. Until this happens, the recycling process is incomplete, and the recyclable material collected will still need disposal.

Events in China over the last few years to limit its imports of recyclables and to establish new, more stringent requirements for lower contamination rates (especially for paper and plastics) has highlighted the need for legislation to create new markets and strengthen existing markets for recyclables.

According to the Minnesota Recycling Market Development Program and Circular Matters, there are more than 20 states with active market development programs. These programs have resulted in expanding recycling manufacturing capacity, new recycling jobs, and programs to increase purchases of recycled products.

House Bill 164 would encourage Maryland businesses to use recyclable materials, offer opportunities for new recycling businesses, and expand state buy recycled programs. These efforts would make Maryland a leader not only in the nation, but a leader for the private sector as well.

The bill would establish the Department of the Environment as the lead agency for this effort and encourage cooperation with other departments and organizations on expanding markets for recycled materials and recycled products. The bill would require MDE to evaluate current markets, make recommendations to improve markets, target markets that need market 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 for recycling markets and recycled products. The goal of the bill is to let the private sector know that “Maryland is Open for Recycling Business.”

Collecting more materials alone will not move the needle on recycling rates. We also need a demand (market) driven effort to increase the level of recycling in the state and keep materials out of our landfills and other disposal options. We need to get more businesses to use recyclable materials and attract new businesses to use such materials. Maryland needs to build on our buy recycled efforts (where we have been a national leader since 1977) to buy and use more recycled products. These programs will help extend our landfill life for future generations, limit incineration, reduce using new raw materials, reduce energy use, and lower generation of greenhouse gases. The state should make market development a centerpiece of our state efforts to increase recycling.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.