

ODETTE RAMOS

Councilwoman District 14



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100 N. Holliday Street, Room 506, Baltimore MD 21202

February 26, 2021

Testimony

HB1094/SB650 Work Group to Study the Establishment of a Regional Waste Facility

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Honorable Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to urge this Committee to vote a favorable report with amendments to HB1904 - Work Group to Student the Establishment of a Regional Waste Facility.

We are requesting that the concept of a regional waste facility be removed from this bill, and instead the emphasis of the work group be placed on regional waste reduction. The amendment language is attached to this testimony.

Our main goal is to shut down our Wheelabrator incinerator. The air quality has been devastating for resident downwind of the incinerator, mostly in Black and Brown neighborhoods. According to a study commissioned by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the incinerator causes \$55 million in health problems for those downwind.

While our previous Council sought to close Wheelabrator, the contract was extended. We will use this time to put together waste reduction strategies so that we no longer have to feed our trash into the incinerator. However, we need the help of the counties around us. Baltimore County, Howard County and others use our incinerator to get rid of their waste. We ask that our partners reduce their waste so that our residents don't become sick from the incinerator that burns their waste.

This is why we are very excited about the opportunity for this working group. We look forward to working with the counties that surround us on strategies for reducing waste in a regional fashion. One policy might be a Bottle and Can Deposit which is near impossible to do without a regional or statewide approach.

The end of the contract with Wheelabrator is ten years from now. We have the time to make serious changes in our waste management, to move toward Zero waste and close down our incinerator at the end of the contract. Please help us do that. Only a regional approach will work to meet our goal.

Please vote a favorable report, with the amendments, to HB1094.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Odette Ramos'.

Odette Ramos, Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

Proposed Amendments:

Amendment language:

Title: HB1904 - Work Group to Study the Establishment of a Regional Waste ~~Facility~~-REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Page 1 lines 13 and 14: restate this sentence to read: The Department of the Environment shall convene a workgroup to ~~evaluate the establishment of a regional waste disposal facility to serve~~ CREATE A REGIONAL APPROACH TO WASTE REDUCTION IN.....

Page 2 lines 6-8: Remove this language entirely.