



Community of Curtis Bay Association, INC.

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Testimony Supporting HB11
House Economic Matters Committee
March 4, 2022

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Community of Curtis Bay Association is writing to express our ongoing and unyielding support for a just transition to Zero Waste and away from burning and burying. In South Baltimore, we have long been involuntary hosts to large incinerators and landfills that focus on disposal as the primary way to deal with discarded materials. We know first hand that these methods are unsustainable and impose real costs to our health, environment and economy. We also know that these methods squander the economic value of the natural resources burned and buried. We strongly believe that it is long past time to realign state support fully in the direction of community led zero waste solutions and away from subsidizing dirty energy and the disposal of our limited natural resources.

We trust that our state leaders have done their homework as this issue has been the subject of reform for nearly a decade ever since incineration was elevated to tier one of the state's RPS as a new incinerator (would have been the largest in the nation) was slated to be built less than a mile from homes and schools in Curtis Bay. We opposed that development because incinerators are more polluting per hour of energy produced than coal. We absolutely oppose the use of millions of dollars in public subsidies to continue to flow to incinerators in Maryland. Our 21226 zip code has long registered some of the most toxic air emissions in the nation. The BRESCO

incinerator stands as the single worst source of air pollution in our City and frontline Black and poor communities surrounding it are harmed every day as evidenced by the estimated 55 million dollars in health damages directly linked to emissions.

Over the years, officials deliberating on this issue have raised sincere questions about the alternatives to incineration and the plan for moving away from burning. We take that question very seriously and as a community, have stepped up to help lead the planning and implementation effort to accelerate the phasing out incineration here in Baltimore and reducing our reliance on landfilling. For example, right now we are working to develop the compost infrastructure that Baltimore currently lacks on a 64 acre brownfield site in our community as an anchor in a zero waste resource recovery park that can responsibly manage materials at scale that are currently burned. Imagine how much faster the transition to Zero Waste could occur if a development like the one we are working to advance was the recipient of millions of dollars in public subsidy?

The issue is really about choices at the state and local level. Do we choose to put our support in the form of policy, resources and land behind incineration or do we direct support for rebuilding local re-use, recycling and compost industries that can manage materials, create more jobs and reduce negative externalities to our shared ecosystem?

To make it plain - Maryland passed a law last year that clearly states a preference for composting food and organic waste rather than landfilling or incinerating and yet - as we speak, 200 tons of food scraps are burned every day at the BRESKO incinerator. This fact remains because Baltimore lacks the compost infrastructure required to divert organic waste and manage it in accord with state law. We are working on the ground to change this and are pleading for state policy that is consistent and coherent with stated objectives so that we can row together towards common sense shared goals that put our health and economy and environment first.

Removing subsidies from trash incineration is a key part of an intentional and systematic approach to achieving the broad consensus we see, and are proud to have contributed to building over the years. These are the steps needed to get to where residents, workers, businesses, and officials are all saying we want to go:

- Establish a “Just Transition for Zero Waste Fund” to develop new community-owned compost, recycling, deconstruction and reuse infrastructure
- End subsidies for the incinerators and landfills we are transitioning away from

- Build and strengthen local end markets for compost and recycled commodities
- Establish protections for sanitation workers as we transition from outdated technologies to current approaches
- Create relief funds for the communities that have hosted toxic waste infrastructure for decades

We thank you for deliberating on this critical matter and we urge you to make this the year we finally clean up our state's RPS and move in earnest towards a zero waste future that creates good jobs, clean air and healthy stable communities across Maryland.

Sincerely,

Community of Curtis Bay Association Board