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MAYOR

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HB 161

March 23, 2023

TO: Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 161 – Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority – Evaluation & Termination of Bond Authority (Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority Sunset Act)

POSITION: LETTER OF CONCERN

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) has deep concerns regarding House Bill (HB) 161 and its intention to consider transferring the functions and staff of the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, a regional body, to an entity with a State-wide focus.

HB 161 would prohibit the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority (NMWDA) from issuing bonds by a certain date; require the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) to conduct an evaluation of the NMWDA; require the Maryland Environmental Service (MES) and the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) to review certain aspects of the NMWDA and analyze whether the MES or the MCEC is able to assume those aspects; require the NMWDA to provide information that the DLS, MES and MCEC request; require the DLS, MES, and MCEC to follow procedures that maintain confidentiality of certain information, documents, and proceedings; and generally relating to the NMWDA.

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works has been a member of the NMWDA since its formation as a regional body in 1980. It provides its members with a regular forum for regional discussions on a range of solid waste management issues and topics. NMWDA's talented support staff is a valuable resource to Solid Waste leadership, providing information on industry standards and trends that have been affecting operations on a global scale. The NMWDA helped the City complete a "Less Waste Better Baltimore" plan that analyzed the multiple public and private waste streams generated within and brought into the City, and how Baltimore could transition to a waste diversion culture. NMWDA is currently assisting with the re-writing of the City State-required Ten-Year Solid Waste Management Plan, which includes public outreach, virtual and in-person meetings to gather public comments, and a final plan for consideration and approval by the Mayor and City Council.

The NMWDA is providing guidance and support for the contracting of Quarantine Landfill projects under a \$5M and \$2M Compliance MOUs affecting the operation and maintenance of a range of facilities at the landfill; from leachate collection systems, daily cover procedures, maintenance of cell drainage layers, to a daily compliance inspection tool and dashboard, a 5-year strategic plan and budget. The NMWDA is assisting with access to and creation of contracts and agreements with consultants and contractors for much needed health and safety improvement at three critical Solid Waste yards, as well as their rehabilitation. Thanks to the foresight of this Legislative body, the City will be receiving much needed capital bond funds toward the creation of an Eastside Transfer Station on the closed Bowley's Lane Landfill. This facility will provide a location for our solid waste collections crews working on the east side of the City to bring their loads to a convenient location, making them more efficient in the service of their routes. This Station will also provide another convenient location for small haulers to bring their loads. The NMWDA is helping expedite this project by assisting with the hiring of a design engineering firm.

Recent assistance from the NMWDA resulted in the City renewing its recycling contract for processing recyclables collected curbside, renewing the City's electronics recycling contract, procuring a contract with a company for the safe reuse or disposal of the tons of scrap tires the City collects and cleans up from illegal dump sites, and providing access to a contractor through the City's NMWDA co-op agreement to acquire a mattress recycling contract.

The City of Baltimore has benefitted greatly from its membership in the NMWDA and its expertise in regional solid waste concerns. The groundwork has been laid to pivot the management of our solid waste stream to methods and means that will repurpose, reuse, and reduce the waste we generate. We believe the NMWDA will be a critical partner in that effort.

It is for these reasons that the City of Baltimore is expressing its concerns regarding the unintended consequences that may result from this well-meaning legislation.