



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Atif Chaudhry, Acting Secretary

BILL: **House Bill 31** - Environment – Products and Packaging – Labeling, Marketing, and Advertising for Recycling

COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters

DATE: February 22, 2023

POSITION: Letter of Information

Upon review of House Bill 31 – Environment – Products and Packaging – Labeling, Marketing and Advertising for Recycling , the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee, Chaired by the Maryland Department of General Services, provides this letter of information for your consideration.

This bill would establish new labeling requirements for plastic materials, prohibit the use of the recycling symbol (chasing arrows around a number) on plastic items that cannot be recycled, set standards for what is considered recyclable and prohibit greenwashing language. Merriam-Webster defines greenwashing as: “the act or practice of making a product, policy, activity, etc. appear to be more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it really is”.

Established by the Green Maryland Act of 2010, the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee (GPC) administers an environmentally preferable purchasing program for the state. State Finance and Procurement § 14-410 charges the Committee with providing the State information and assistance regarding environmentally preferable purchasing, including the development and implementation of statewide policies, guidelines, programs, best practices, and regulations.

HB 31 would expand the existing greenwashing prohibitions outlined by Maryland State Finance and Procurement Article § 14-410 which requires environmental attributes to be consistent with the Federal Trade Commission's guidelines for the Use of Environmental Marketing Terms.

Clearly defining restrictions on vague marketing language that imply environmental preferability would be the logical next step for Maryland’s environmentally conscious consumption and purchasing practices. By clearly defining greenwashing and identifying prohibited language, products will possess fewer misleading environmental claims that can confuse consumers. The passage of this bill will make it easier for State of Maryland’s purchasers to clearly identify and purchase green products.

For additional information, contact Ellen Robertson at 410-260-2908.