



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0643 – Public Information Act - Surveillance Images -
Illegal Dumping in Baltimore City
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
On February 16th 2024**

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 0643 strikes down a provision in the Maryland Public Information Act (PIA) pertaining to the use and disclosure of surveillance images captured by cameras located at illegal dumping sites in Baltimore City. In striking down the provision, this would allow for the Baltimore Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which manages these cameras, to share the images to the public, with the goal of soliciting community assistance in identifying suspects.

Since 2005, the city of Baltimore has been authorized to install surveillance systems at state and city-owned dumping sites and use surveillance images to enforce litter control laws. If caught on camera, suspects are subject to criminal charges in District Court. The city maintains approximately 100 cameras, which are reviewed by DHCD. For example, the cameras can sometimes capture a face on camera along with the vehicle being used, but not always a license plate. Similar to what the Baltimore Police Department already does, DHCD

would like to be able to utilize social media to solicit community assistance in identifying these suspects.

This bill is incredibly important to me and hits very close to home in my district. My office gets many, many calls about constituents being subject to illegal dumping, and something needs to be done. As stated in the Baltimore Banner, it is a “public nuisance that can attract animals and pests, cause unsavory odors and set off a chain reaction that produces more blight”. It also causes health risks and can be a fire hazard along with an overall decrease in quality of life, all the while costing the city millions of dollars in the costs of cleanup. Beyond just the health and safety concerns, the dumps create a negative first impression of our thriving District 41 communities, staining their reputations for passersby. Our neighborhoods need to get cleaned up.

SB0643 is an essential bill for District 41 and Baltimore at large. It can provide an effective deterrent for those who illegally dump. This bill helps to not only identify the individuals involved in illegal dumping, but also to get them prosecuted accordingly.

As such, I urge this committee to issue a favorable report in regards to SB0643.

Respectfully,

Jill P. Carter