



February 20, 2023

To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters Committee
Re: HB 31 Environment – Products and Packaging – Labeling, Marketing, and Advertising for Recycling

The Maryland Recycling Network promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's") of materials otherwise destined for disposal and the purchase of products made with recycled material content. We achieve these goals through education programs, advocacy activities to affect public policy, technical assistance efforts, and the development of markets to purchase recycled materials and manufacture products with recycled content.

Our members are county and municipal government recycling managers, private sector recyclers, non-profit recyclers and citizens who support recycling. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the county and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

HB 31 Truth in Labelling

We support HB 31 and suggest one amendment.

We thank Delegate Love for this bill. Truth in Labelling is a legislative priority for recycling. Our members have seen too many instances when well-meaning Marylanders place non-recyclable packages in their recycling bins because they mistakenly assume it is recyclable. This usually happens due to the inclusion of the recycling "chasing arrows" sign on the bottom of plastic containers. This must stop.

The seven recyclable processing facilities located in Maryland (also known as "MRFs" for "Material Recycling Facilities") do an admirable job in cleaning up the materials people place in their recycling bin and preparing raw materials for manufacturers. Their job will be easier if people are not misled by advertisements or symbols that falsely imply a package is recyclable when, in fact, it is not.

The bill sets up reasonable requirements for being considered recyclable in Maryland (see Section 9-2404(A)). The sixty percent threshold is the same as found in Section 260.12 of the Federal Trade Commission's Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims (also known as the "Green Guides"). Determining the ability of a package type to be covered by this requirement should be relatively easy.

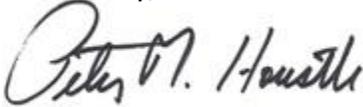
We are suggesting one amendment to the bill. “Materials Recovery Facility” is defined as a facility that “processes recyclable materials to sell to manufacturers for use as raw materials for new products” (9-2501(E) page 5, lines 22-24). That definition covers a wide array of scrap recycling facilities. We suggest defining “Material Recovery Facility” as a “facility that processes single or dual stream curbside recyclable materials to sell to manufacturers for use as raw materials for new products” is a more precise definition that fits the purpose of meeting the 60 percent processor requirement found in 9-2504 (I)(1)2, page 8, lines 5-7.

Passage of this legislation will enhance our ability to increase recycling in Maryland. We welcome the opportunity to work with the author as this bill moves forward.

The Maryland Recycling Network stands ready to serve as a sounding board and resource for legislators and others interested in pursuing our mission. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email phoustle@marylandrecyclingnetwork.org, phone 301-725-2508 or mail - MRN, PO Box 1640, Columbia MD 21044 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the above.

We look forward to working with you to continue the strides we have all made to improve Maryland’s recycling programs in a time- and cost-effective manner.

Sincerely,



Peter M. Houstle
Executive Director