

**MARYLAND RECYCLERS COALITION**  
**1100 South Calvert Street, Suite 2700**  
**Baltimore, Maryland 21202**  
**410-385-5325**

February 27, 2002

The Honorable John A. Hurson  
Chairman  
Environmental Matters Committee  
House of Delegates of Maryland  
161 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 299 (State Solid Waste Management Fund)

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Since its founding in 1988, the Maryland Recyclers Coalition (MRC) has been pursuing its mission to promote sustainable reduction, reuse, and recycling of materials otherwise destined for disposal and promote the buying of products made with recycled material content. MRC is a broad-based, state-wide organization composed of local governments, businesses, non-profit organizations, and individuals.

Maryland should be proud of its 36% recycling rate and the 25% of the State's local jurisdictions implementing source reduction programs. **But more needs to be done.** The State's landfills are rapidly reaching capacity. What is happening in Prince George's County is not unlike the situation in other jurisdictions. The County recently closed a landfill, and the one remaining landfill has a short life-expectancy. The cost of siting, operating, and closing landfills is more expensive than ever, costing tens of millions of dollars, to say nothing about the problems inherent in identifying a location for a new landfill. With the increase in population and the development around the State, it is and will be extremely difficult to identify locations suitable for new landfills.

Although some jurisdictions have contracted for the out-of-state disposal of their wastes, the U.S. Congress seems to be moving closer and closer to allowing states to ban the importation of out-of-state trash. Both of these developments would have a profound affect on solid waste management in Maryland. It should also be noted that many of the so-called mega landfills, several of which are in Virginia, are privately owned and operated, and users are subject to the prices set by the market and private industry.

Although municipalities and counties around the State are responsible for recycling programs and the success the State has enjoyed, the State, nevertheless, can play a significant role in the maintenance and growth of recycling through continuing promotion and in engaging in some programs more efficiently and economically operated on a state-wide basis. There are a number of programs, such as community outreach, electronics recycling, and hazardous waste collection and disposal, that could be implemented in a more cost effective manner if performed on a state-wide or regional basis rather than each county having its own program.

As you know, the Solid Waste Administration (SWA) of the Maryland Department of the Environment is funded almost solely through the General Fund, and there is always strong competition for those funds. As a result, it has been extremely difficult for the department to fulfill its recycling mission.

**MRC has always been supportive of efforts to expand recycling, encourage source reduction, and promote “buy recycled,” and, in so doing, we endorse the concept of increased funding for State efforts in these areas.** This would be consistent with the findings of the Maryland Recycling Advisory Group and the Governor’s Solid Waste Management Task Force (1998), both of which MRC participated in and which MRC unanimously endorsed.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

John L. Brunner  
Chair