



March 4, 2024

To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee; and

To: Delegates Hill, Boyce, Fair, Foley, Guyton, Kaufman, Lehman, R. Long, McCaskill, Ruth, Simpson, Taveras, Terrasa, and Woods

Re: HB1355 Mattress Stewardship Program – Establishment

I'm Kitty McIlroy, President of Maryland Recycling Network (MRN), in support of HB1355 with amendments. I bring my experience managing mattress and box spring recycling contracts at the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority. I am not speaking on behalf of the Authority.

Maryland Recycling Network members include municipal recycling managers, private sector and non-profit recyclers and individuals. We have direct experience operating recycling and composting programs at the private sector and municipal government level. We know the ins and outs of recycling in Maryland. Our experience informs our comments.

Maryland Recycling Network promotes sustainable reduction, reuse and recycling (the 3 "R's"), to ensure that the use of virgin materials is minimized, materials otherwise destined for disposal are reused or recycled and strong demand exists for buying 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.

We thank Delegates Hill and others for sponsoring this Bill.

Bulky material such as mattresses and box springs are safety and fire hazards and "pose several challenges for landfills...They don't compact well, take up a lot of space, create flammable air pockets, and the springs tend to get tangled in [expensive] ...bulldozer compacting equipment, often damaging it," delaying solid waste operating activities due to costly repairs [\[Cascade Alliance, The State of the Mattress Recycling Industry, Third Edition, February 2017\]](#).

Mattress and box spring recycling is a manual labor-intensive process, that also requires costly equipment to further dismantle and bale its components. Costs associated with the collection of whole units, de-manufacturing, marketing and further downstream transportation and processing, are not fully offset by marginal revenues received from the broken-down commodities. Thus, there will likely always be a net cost associated with mattress and box spring recycling.

Existing commodity markets in Maryland for mattress and box spring components include those for metal, foam and quilted ticking, about 85% of materials from all end-of-life units. [According to the Mattress Recycling Council](#), "steel mattress springs are sold as scrap metal...and mattress foam is mostly recycled into carpet padding." This Bill would support the ability for recyclers to scale up and build

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stable downstream recycling markets for other mattress commodities such as wood, fabrics, felt and coconut fiber materials.

Since January 2022, just four Maryland jurisdictions have spent over \$300,000 on these recycling programs, while diverting over 1.6 million pounds of mattresses and box springs from disposal.

HB1355 is critical to supporting these recycling programs by taking this financial burden off local government and the public. It will allow Jurisdictions to divert much needed tax revenues to other critical public sector services. It will eliminate fees at collection sites and disincentivize these materials from ending up illegally dumped or in the disposal stream (which is currently the less expensive solid waste management choice for many, if not all entities, commercial and residential sectors included).

This funding will grow local jobs and support current mattress recycling contracts run by local jurisdictions, while also supporting the expansion of new contracts for local jurisdictions that have had no funding available to kickstart this specific recycling program, especially in rural and underserved areas.

According to the Mattress Recycling Council, a [recent analysis](#) of the California program's environmental footprint from collection to recycling shows that "every mattress recycled saves 500 gallons of water, enough energy to power the average household for three days and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equivalent to driving 60 fewer miles."

MRN's proposed amendments, found in the attachment, incorporate language from SB370, passed in 2019, regarding local government provisions when enforcing mandatory recycling in office buildings. We believe similar enforcement language is necessary, regarding the mattress disposal ban language noted in this Bill. Other amendments are also minor and seek to clarify supporting local government control over their mattress recycling programs and maintain long term funding for these efforts, in addition to giving the Department of the Environment the ability to analyze and approve the impact of collection costs from private property before they are incorporated in the producer plans and reflected on a consumer fee.

Maryland already has a consumer fee for tire recycling. This Bill complements that law, to ensure difficult material is responsibly managed.

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 MRN 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.

Sincerely,

Kitty McIlroy
President
Maryland Recycling Network