



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Martin O'Malley
Governor

Shari T. Wilson
Secretary

Anthony G. Brown
Lieutenant Governor

Robert M. Summers, Ph.D.
Deputy Secretary

April 7, 2010

The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chairman
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis MD 21401

The Honorable Maggie L. McIntosh, Chairman
Environmental Matters Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 693 – Green Maryland Act of 2010

Dear Chairmen Hammen and McIntosh:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or "the Department") has reviewed Senate Bill 693, entitled *Green Maryland Act of 2010*, and we would like to express our support for the overall objectives of recycling and waste reduction and the goals of Senate Bill 693.

The bill would require the Department of General Services (DGS) to purchase 90 percent of its paper as recycled paper. DGS has reported to MDE that in FY 2009, buying paper products made with recycled content paper was the rule for DGS, not the exception, with 97 percent of paper products (e.g., bond paper, computer paper, etc.) purchased made from recycled content paper. This is consistent with the preceding four years' rate of FY 2005 – 93 percent, FY 2006 – 99 percent, FY 2007 – 96 percent, and FY 2008 – 99 percent.

Each unit of State government would be required to review annually the procurement specifications currently used by the unit and, to the extent practicable, review its procurement specifications in accordance with a best practices manual and strategy to increase environmentally preferable purchasing to be developed by DGS in consultation with MDE. Annually, each State unit would be required to report to MDE on the unit's procurement of recycled materials during the preceding fiscal year, including the types and quantities of materials procured and the percentage of recycled materials in the unit's gross purchases.

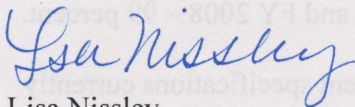
The provision to create a Maryland Green Purchasing Committee to provide the State with information and assistance regarding environmentally preferable purchasing would enable the State to bring representatives from DGS, DBM, DNR, DHMH, DBED, MDOT, DPSCS, and the University of Maryland together to share knowledge, experience, and resources to make the best informed decisions regarding the State's purchases. The requirement in the bill for the Committee to consider greater use and procurement of meters to measure electricity consumption, achieving greater energy efficiency through implementation of policies that reduce operating times for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems in State-owned or operated buildings, increasing energy efficiency of new and existing computer servers and data storage center operations, and procuring food and beverage containers and utensils made of biodegradable materials or plant-based plastics, would support the Maryland Climate Action Plan's recommendations and goals and Governor O'Malley's EmPOWER Maryland energy reduction initiative to reduce State government's power consumption 15 percent by 2015. In addition, the requirement that the Committee develop purchasing guidelines to address practices, products, services, and food that reduce negative impacts on the human health and the environment, as well as consumption changes and a list of contracts that include human health and environmental specifications for at least five prioritized categories of goods or services will ensure that State government will serve as an example for our citizens in establishing healthy habits and preserving our precious natural resources.

The Department strongly supports the use of properly composted materials as fertilizer in land maintenance activities paid for with public funding. Compost is a good alternative to conventional fertilizers and other soil amendments at a lower price.

The Department is supportive of many concepts that would result in reduced disposal and increased recycling, particularly for State government. Waste diversion and recycling save energy, reduce greenhouse gasses and other pollutants generated in the manufacturing process and at landfills, save natural resources, and reduce the amount of waste disposed. Even in times of lowered market returns on recyclables, there are avoided disposal costs associated with recycling. In 2008, State agencies recycled over 26,000 tons of Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) materials for an overall MRA recycling rate of 27.5 percent. This is a slight decrease from the 27.7 percent recycling rate reported in 2007. Obviously State government needs to do better so that we can serve as a proper model to our citizens. Senate Bill 693 could help MDE in its efforts to encourage State agencies to reduce their wastes and recycle more.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor Senate Bill 693 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at lnissley@mde.state.md.us if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Lisa Nissley

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin
Shari T. Wilson, Secretary
Heather Barthel, Director of Legislation and Policy
Horacio Tablada, Director of Land Management Administration