



**HEARING NOTES**

**Legislative Oversight: LO25-0017**

**Zero Waste**

**Committee:** Public Health and Environment

**Chaired by:** Chairwoman Phylicia Porter

**Hearing Date:** Wednesday, February 25, 2026

**Time (Beginning):** 10:05 AM

**Time (Ending):** 11:35 PM

**Location:** Council Chambers

**Total Attendance:** Approximately 40 In-Person  
 Approximately 10 Virtually

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Phylicia Porter      James Torrence  
 Zac Blanchard      Odette Ramos  
 Mark Conway

<b>Bill Synopsis in the file?</b> .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Attendance sheet in the file?</b> .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Agency reports read.</b> .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Video or audio-digitally recorded?</b> .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?</b> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Evidence of notification to property owners?</b> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
<b>Final vote taken at this hearing?</b> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a

**Major Speakers**

*(This is not an attendance record.)*

- Matthew Garbark, Department of Public Works
- Ava Richardson, Department of Planning
- Tierra Brown, Department of Public Works
- Gabriel Stuart-Sikowitz, Department of Finance
- Christine Griffin, Department of Public Works
- Cara Murray, Department of Public Works

- **Public Testimony**
    - Anne Wilson, In-person Speaker
    - Greg Sawtell, Virtual (on-line) Speaker
    - Carlos Sanchez, Virtual (on-line) Speaker
    - Dante Davidso-Swinton, Virtual (on-line) Speaker
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### **Major Issues Discussed**

1. Chairwoman Porter called the hearing to order, introduced the committee/council members and briefly talked about the purpose of the hearing before turning the microphones over to the representatives from the Department of Public Works (DPW).
2. The agency representatives from the Department of Public Works gave a PowerPoint Presentation. **A copy is on file.** Some comments and/or topics of discussion were:
  - Comment: “We must rethink how we treat our waste!”
  - DPW is creating a “contamination” dashboard!
  - The new compose facility will be located on Bowley’s Lane
3. Committee/council members asked questions, stated concerns, and made comments. Some highlighted topics of discussion, comments and/concerns were:
  - Zero Waste Hierarchy – shown in the PowerPoint
    - **Requested by Committee member Conway:**
      - **Provide the percentage breakdown for each area listed in the hierarchy.**
  - Incentives
    - What kind of incentives can we offer to get residents to burn more trash and waste less?
      - Are there any other incentives happening across the country for same?
    - Incentives are needed for placing bottles elsewhere! (I believe there is a great demand for glass)
      - Comments regarding the Bottle Deposit Bill in Annapolis
        - We need to do something here! (City government)
          - There is a big market for glass, and we should be rushing to figure out how to get our glass on the market!
      - “I understand that there is a “Request for Information (RFI) – for the Recycling and Collection of Bottles
        - **Requested by Committee member Ramos: to DPW**
          - **To be presented at the next committee hearing on Zero Waste: 1. What has the DPW asked for and 2. What can the City do regarding the “Recycling and Collection of Bottles - RFI**
  - Tobacco Products
    - Comments regarding the bill in Annapolis regarding tobacco products
      - Smoke shops, vape shops, vape batteries, etc.
        - **What challenges (if any) have DPW experience for disposing of vape batteries or similar products? Requested by Committee member Blanchard: Provide information and/or data regarding these challenges before the upcoming hearing(s) regarding same. Note: a hearing will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> regarding Tobacco**

**Retailers and another hearing on March 26<sup>th</sup> regarding Zoning  
– Uses - Smoke Shops**

- Comments:
  - Regarding getting compost back at the Waverly market sometime this Spring
  - Regarding the works of the Sisson Street Task Force
  - Regarding the need for taking other materials out of the landfill(s) to be re-used elsewhere
  - Regarding the need for cleaner alleys and having more receptacles available
- Curbside Composting Pilot
  - 500 Households and 10 schools for pilot – where did these figures come from?
    - Requested by Committee member Blanchard: Please provide: What would the cost be if it was 2,000 households instead of 500 households?
- The Art of Recycling
  - Educating community – is of concern
  - We need to get “on the front end” of educating residents!
  - Proper use of receptacles – is of concern
  - How can we multiply enforcement?
  - Why don’t we have people “on the ground” (physically) to teach the community about recycling? Like in prior years?
  - Comments regarding: Having educators in school, as well as getting a return on investments
    - Requested by Committee member Torrence: Please provide:
      - 1. Which schools are involved in educating the public; to provide the current staffing for same
      - 2. What would it look like in terms of staff for an Ideal Program for same?
- Composting
  - Have we looked at “the modeling” for when we will hit profitability?
  - Where would we begin to scale once the facility is at full capacity? Have we thought this through?
  - Comments regarding: The importance of educating the public, that the City will not make a profit from composting for several years.
    - Requested by Committee member Torrence: Provide: How the DPW plans to communicate to the public that a profit from composting will not be made for several years?
- Civil Rights Complaint filed by the South Baltimore Community – (Waste Infrastructure)
  - Can you talk about how the proposed investment will impact on the on-going complaint?
- Capital Budget
  - \$3 million in fiscal year 2027 budget for phase one of the compost facility – Bowley’s Lane
    - Is this funding still needed to complete the Bowley’s Lane Facility? **Answer: Yes**
    - Do you know why the Department of Planning sided against the funding?
      - Comment/Concern: Do not want this funding to be re-directed or used for something else!

- Upon Completion of Facility
    - Upon completion of this facility, will DPW build other such facilities for the “Less Waste Baltimore Plan?” **Answer: Yes**
  - Landfill Tipping Fees Increase
    - Comment: Tipping fees tonnage waste increased by 49.2%
      - Was there an increase in deposit by private haulers?
      - Two (2) types of tipping fees – comments regarding same
      - **Request by Chairwoman Porter: Provide the “specifics” of the BRESCO Contract/Agreement**
  - Bulk Waste – Slide #28 – Residential Organics
    - What falls into the “white bar” in this category?
    - From this bar (100%) what percentage falls into:
      - Food scraps?
      - Yard cuttings/materials?
      - What is/are the most valuable material(s) for us to incentivize ourselves to recover?
        - **Requested by Committee member Conway: Provide a list and/or breakdown of at least the top 10 materials that will/would fit the “market” desires. And what capacity do we have to recover same from our waste stream?”**
  - Use of Landfill
    - 40% less use of landfill – why?
      - **Requested by Committee member Ramos: Provide within the next few weeks but no later than the next committee hearing on Zero Waste: Why has the use of the landfill decreased.**
  - Remainder of the Zero Waste Goal Since the Inception of the Sustainability Plan
    - Do we have any data on which targets have and/or have not been met? And where are we falling short?
      - **Requested by Chairwoman Porter: Provide the specific progress to date. Also, let us know when the 2025 Report will be released (Climate Action Plan)**
4. Public Testimony was taken (approximately four [4] speakers). Some comments, topics of discussion and/or concerns were:
- Concerns and/or Comments:
    - Glad to hear about all the progress the city is making with zero waste and hope to hear more of it!
    - Believe there will be a trust issue when it comes to the incinerator! A plan is needed!
    - Incentives needed for people to use the landfill – comments
    - Question regarding hazardous waste
    - Questions/concern about “discount” rates
    - Suggestions regarding how to invest in the materials placed in the landfill
    - **Requested by Chairwoman Porter: DPW is to respond to the questions from two virtual speakers, as follows:**
      - **1. Mr. Sawtell: Is DPW continuing to attempt to get permission to make use of hazardous materials as an alternative to landfill cover?**
      - **2. Mr. Sanchez: A. Why are tipping fees so low for commercial haulers?  
B. Why is the City still giving a discount rate to dispose of ash?  
How is it managed? And what prevents it from becoming airborne?**

C. After over 15 years of organizing, why does DPW make it so cheap to dump trash in south Baltimore through its pricing and policies?

5. Chairwoman Porter gave closing remarks, "We are aiming to make zero waste as efficient as possible in the City of Baltimore."
  6. Hearing recessed.
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### Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes  No

If yes, describe.

1. See "red and yellow" highlights above.
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*Marguerite M. Currin*

Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff  
cc: Bill File

Date: March 3, 2026

## Baltimore City Council Committee Hearing Attendance Record

<b>Subject: Legislative Oversight: Zero Waste</b>	<b># LO25-0017</b>
<b>Committee: Public Health and Environment</b>	<b>Chair: Phylicia Porter</b>
<b>Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026</b>	<b>Time: 10:00 AM</b>
<b>Location: Council Chambers</b>	

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY



First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email	<b>Testify</b>	What is your position on this bill?		Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*	
				For	Against	Yes	No
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anne	Wilson	221 Strong Pktn <i>please find compost</i>	✓				
Matthew	Garbank	DPW					
Ava	Richardson	DOP					
Tierra	Brown	DPW					
Gab	Stuart-Sikowitz	Finance					
Alan	Robinson	DPW					
<del>Isiah</del> Christine	Griffith	Mayor's Office					

\*NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: 410-396-4730

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First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email	<b>Testify</b>	What is your position on this bill?		Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*	
				For	Against	Yes	No
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christine	Griffin	DPW					
Latoya	Curtis	DPW					

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# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Public Health & Environment Committee

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Wednesday, February 25, 2026

10:00 AM Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall, Phone:  
1-408-418-9388, Access code: 2344 773 5174, Password:  
Public, Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=md8af8dc9e59e35cf45edb339ffa25f2e)  
MTID=md8af8dc9e59e35cf45edb339ffa25f2e

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#### LO25-0017 - Zero Waste

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

**Present** 5 - Phylicia Porter, Mark Conway, James Torrence, John Bullock, and Odette Ramos

**Absent** 2 - Mark Parker, and Ryan Dorsey

#### **ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

##### LO25-0017 Zero Waste

For the purpose of assessing the City of Baltimore's progress toward achieving its Zero Waste goals, as outlined in the Baltimore Sustainability Plan, examining the effectiveness of current waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs; evaluating challenges in implementation and enforcement; and exploring opportunities for improvements and investment in sustainable waste management infrastructure.

Hearing called to recess; to reconvene at a later date.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**