


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Rudolph S. Chow, P.E., Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	City Council Resolution 19-0137R		

DATE: May 1, 2019

TO

TO Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

INTRODUCTION

I am herein reporting on City Council Resolution 19-0137R introduced by Council Member Stoles, President Young, Council members Henry, Dorsey, Scott, Bullock, Cohen, Sneed, Pinkett, Schleifer, Clarke, Reisinger, Middleton, and Costello.

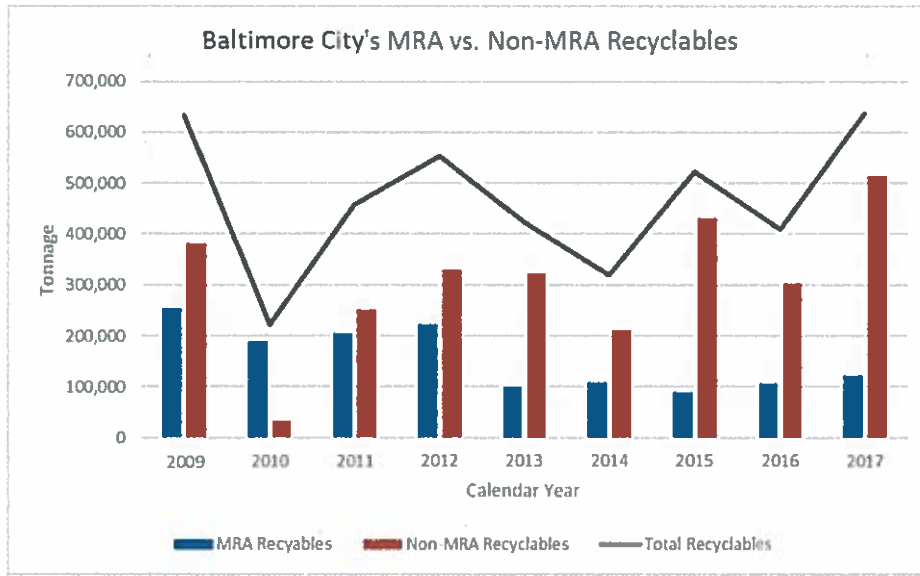
PURPOSE

The purpose of the Resolution is to invite the Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Head of the Bureau of Solid Waste to discuss Baltimore City's recycling program and its progress.

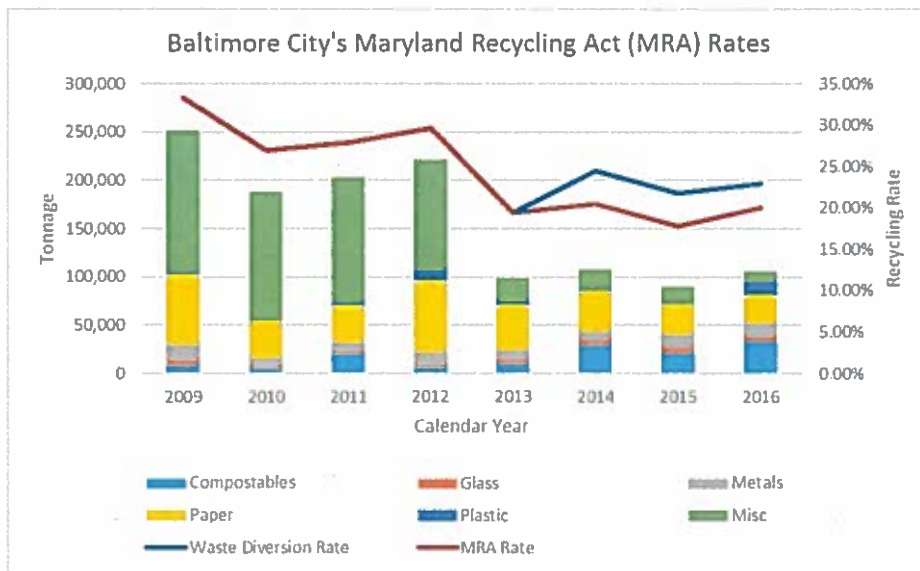
BRIEF HISTORY

Baltimore City, through the Department of Public Works' Bureau of Solid Waste, has offered curbside collection of single stream recyclables since 2008 and, since the advent of One PLUS ONE, collects recyclables every week. Participants may set out their recyclables in paper bags, cardboard boxes, a container of their own designation, or in a yellow City recycling bin. DPW sells two sizes of recycling bins to participants at cost, and regularly hosts special sale price events in various locations around the City. Recyclables must not be set out in plastic bags as the bags contaminate the collection and become entangled in the recycling facility's sorting machine. DPW also provides recycling collection to small businesses, up to three times a week, to encourage their participation. Recyclables may also be dropped off at one of the Citizen Convenience Centers, which also accept e-waste, tires, motor oil and batteries, and household hazardous waste on the first weekend of the month from April through October (Sisson Street only). Special shred events and plastic bag collections are also hosted. In addition to providing recycling education through school presentations, information tables at special events and educational materials at community meetings, webpage information, DPW calendar, social media, and billing inserts, DPW just made a new recycling app available called Recycle Coach to help participants understand what may or may not be recycled and what days their recyclables are scheduled for pickup. <https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/recycle-coach> Recent State laws were enacted to require that larger special events provide recycling containers and collection services, and mandated that multi-family dwelling owners or managers provide recycling to their tenants. Several bills were passed during this year's General Assembly Session to assist with boosting recycling: a ban on using polystyrene products in food service establishments and prohibit retail sales of these polystyrene containers would go into effect July 1, 2020; and a mandate for the recycling and collection of recyclable materials (paper and cardboard, metal, plastic materials) from buildings having 150,000 square feet or greater of office space on or before October 2021. Baltimore City's own polystyrene container ban goes into effect this October.

The Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) (Maryland Environment Article, Title 9-505) requires each county with a population over 150,000 to produce a recycling plan that "provides for a reduction through recycling of at least 35% of the county's solid waste stream by weight." The State law's definition of the "solid waste stream" excludes: "hospital waste, rubble, scrap material, land clearing debris, sewage sludge, or waste generated by a single individual or business and disposed of in a facility dedicated solely for that entity's waste." Therefore, these materials, among others, are not counted when determining the MRA rate.



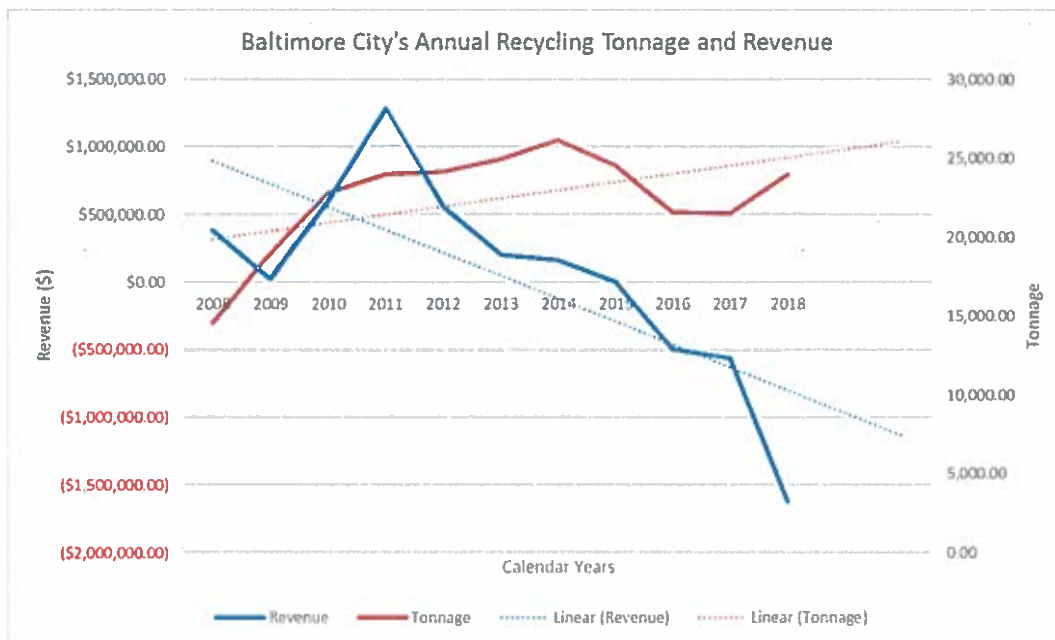
Each county must submit to the MDE an annual MRA Tonnage Reporting Survey, which includes its public and private recycling amounts and the diversion of its solid waste stream. It is not mandatory for businesses to recycle or to report recycling in the State of Maryland. This makes it very difficult for local governments to track whether businesses are recycling, thus making it impossible to have accurate recycling rates. In Calendar Year 2017, Baltimore City's MRA recycling rate was 23.95% while its total waste diversion rate was 27.95%. The MRA recycling rate in 2016 was 20%, in 2015 it was 17.8%, and in 2014, it was 20.44%.



FISCAL IMPACT

Removing recyclable materials from the waste stream provides the opportunity to reduce the amount of waste that is landfilled or combusted, and creates opportunities for those materials to be converted into other products or purposes, thus helping to minimize the use of virgin materials in product production. As a municipality, recycling can reduce waste costs, either by receiving compensation for valuable recyclables through a recycling vendor, or by incurring costs less than

traditional tipping fees. It also helps reduce the impact on landfill capacities. The market for recyclables has always fluctuated, providing attractive pricing for one type of recyclable over another, depending on market demand. China has played a large role in recycling, taking on recyclable materials from around the world to foster development of industries in their country. However, the growth of Chinese industries created a new paradigm for China, who is now generating their own recyclables and markets, and no longer needs to import these materials. As a result, China instituted strict contamination standards which would allow them to reject materials sent to their ports. Very quickly, the materials were diverted to Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and other countries, which in turn quickly responded with their own restrictions. These actions, combined with a drop in U.S. markets for these materials, has resulted in some local governments stopping their recycling programs. For Baltimore, it has meant that the Bureau of Solid Waste now expends \$100,000 - \$160,000/month to process the recyclable materials, in addition to an average of \$70,000 - \$90,000/month to transport the materials to the recycling facility, due to the unavailability of the Northwest Transfer Station during its renovation. Prior to 2016, the recycling program generated revenue for the City, as demonstrated in the following graph.



AGENCY/DEPARTMENT POSITION

The Department of Public Works will attend the scheduled hearing on City Council Resolution 19-0137R to present information on the Department's role in encouraging recycling, the status of the Solid Waste Master Plan, and to assist with any questions the Committee and Council members may have on the issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Marcia Collins at 410-396-1960 (Marcia.Collins@baltimorecity.gov).

Sincerely,



Rudolph S. Chow, P.E.
Director