



January 24, 2014

Honorable Martin O'Malley
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley:

I am writing you on behalf of the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA) regarding your support for Zero Waste. We are excited that you recognize Zero Waste as a powerful message that encourages all of us to rethink our use of resources and how to operate more efficiently on this planet.

As you support Zero Waste, we would like to enlist your support for the ZWIA definition of Zero Waste that is the only one that has been peer reviewed and accepted by worldwide Zero Waste, recycling and environmental leaders:

"Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.

Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them.

Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health."

ZWIA was established over ten years ago to set the standards to guide the development of Zero Waste in the world. In addition to the above definition, ZWIA has adopted [Zero Waste Business Principles](#), [Global Principles for Zero Waste Communities](#) and the [Zero Waste Hierarchy of Highest and Best Uses](#). The Zero Waste Hierarchy was based on the entire carbon life cycle of materials, as well as the embodied energy used to extract virgin resources, manufacture a product, and transport a product to market. These tools describe what Zero Waste means, to assist businesses and communities in developing plans for Zero Waste.

Unfortunately, the Maryland 2012 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act Plan does not conform to the ZWIA Zero Waste definition and principles since it includes "waste-to-energy" as a "bridge" to Zero Waste. ZWIA urges that communities no longer invest in waste-to-energy facilities, as they directly compete for resources with real Zero Waste policies, programs and facilities. Real Zero Waste offers much greater carbon reduction and greenhouse gas reduction potential than waste-to-energy facilities.

We therefore urge you to either eliminate your state's plans for "waste-to-energy" or, at a minimum, do not continue to call such facilities a bridge to Zero Waste, as they are direct competitors. We view this as a direct infringement on the Zero Waste brand that we have worked for over a decade to develop.

If you have any questions about Zero Waste and why the ZWIA standards are so important, please see the ZWIA website (www.zwia.org), or contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Gary Liss, ZWIA Zero Waste Certifications Committee Chair
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Cc: Mr. David Costello, Deputy Secretary for Policy and Planning at the Maryland Department of the Environment
Mr. Richard Anthony, Chair, Zero Waste International Alliance