

FREDERICK COUNTY ACQUIRES PROPERTY FOR FUTURE COMPOSTING EXPANSION

Frederick County recently acquired a 138-acre property (Nicolas Hartman Farmstead) adjacent to the Reichs Ford Road Landfill to support the future expansion of its composting program. The County's Division of Solid Waste & Recycling has been seeking additional space to support current operations, accommodate anticipated population growth, and allow for the potential addition of food waste diversion initiatives. County Executive Jessica Fitzwater announced the acquisition during a recent event at the landfill site attended by County officials, project stakeholders and members of the project team on May 29.

The Authority assisted Frederick County with due diligence efforts associated with the acquisition. Frederick County selected ARM Group LLC (ARM), which performed the environmental and preliminary geotechnical engineering evaluations through its consulting contract with the Authority.

ARM conducted a series of environmental and engineering assessments, including services



County officials, project stakeholders, and team members gather during County Executive Jessica Fitzwater's announcement of Frederick County's acquisition of a 138-acre property adjacent to the Reichs Ford Road Landfill.
(Photo courtesy of the Frederick County News-Post)

related to aquatic resources, environmental site assessment, threatened and endangered species, and preliminary geotechnical evaluations. Evaluations completed to date have identified approximately forty-three acres as a potential development footprint for future composting operations and related support infrastructure. At this time, no significant constraints have been identified that would preclude future development of the property, although additional evaluation is ongoing as planning advances.

The acquisition positions Frederick County to meet future organics recycling and composting needs while supporting continued growth in waste diversion programs. The County currently operates a five-acre compost pad where residents can recycle leaves, grass clippings, brush trimmings, and limbs. In 2023, the compost pad was upgraded with a new asphalt surface through a project administered by the Authority, with ARM providing design and construction quality assurance services.

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HIGH ATTENDANCE AT ANNUAL SWANA/MARYLAND RECYCLING NETWORK CONFERENCE HELD IN JUNE



Solid waste, recycling and materials diversion professionals gathered at Martin's West in Baltimore on June 2 for the annual Mid-Atlantic Chapter of SWANA/Maryland Recycling Network (MRN) Conference. It was the second highest attendance at the conference to date, with 203 registered attendees, and was [covered nationally](#)! The conference theme was: *The Road Ahead: Charting Your Course for Next Generation Recycling and Waste Management*. It centered on the changing waste stream, and how its management will need to be continuously adapted based on economic factors, legislative initiatives, regulatory updates, artificial intelligence (AI) and changing resource use of materials, land and water.

The daylong conference featured informative plenary sessions and technical break-out sessions for the participants to choose from. Throughout the day conference attendees were able to interact with exhibitors who were presenting a wide array of services related to materials management. Time for networking was also built into the conference schedule.

Below is a summary of the day, highlighting a few sessions. The full conference agenda can be found here: [2026 MRN/SWANA-MA Conference Program - Maryland Recycling Network](#).

The conference opened with a plenary session led by Dr. Daraius Irani, Ph.D. of Towson University, who provided a candid assessment of economic trends that could impact the solid waste and recycling industry. Dr. Irani provided an overview of the U.S. and Maryland economies, covering challenging but interrelated topics regarding construction, manufacturing, immigration, and inflation. He specifically touched on raw material sourcing (including for auto, steel and aluminum industries), economic drivers impacting consumer purchasing behavior and employment habits, particularly because the Maryland economy is heavily dependent on jobs in government, education, healthcare, transportation, port, and service. Both MRN Executive Director Peter Houstle and Dr. Irani remarked on the current economic challenges facing the solid waste and recycling industry while noting that the industry has successfully adapted to changing market conditions in the past.

In the day's first breakout sessions, participants heard about updates to recycling markets from Angie Webb, Chief of Recycled Products and Marketing at Maryland Environmental Service (MES), and Chaz Miller, Principal at Chaz Miller and Associates. Hans Honerlach of Republic Services provided a concurrent session on the practical review of radioactive waste screening technology and processes.

In summary, Angie and Chaz reminded the audience that post-consumer packaging and paper are simply raw materials looking for a market, and that these markets will always go up and down over time, depending on demand, meaning there is always opportunity for a rebound.

The session concluded with Andi Crooms of Circular Action Alliance (CAA), the new producer responsibility organization for Maryland's paper and packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law, announcing that CAA has kicked off their listening tour

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Diana McKenney Discussing the Gude Landfill Remediation Project

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in Maryland, in order to compile stakeholder input as they build out the reimbursement structure based on needs shared by intended beneficiaries of the law.

The second breakout session of the morning focused on innovative reuse programs that are transforming solid waste and recycling in the United States. Melissa Jung of Upstream presented different policy levers that can help incentivize reuse and refill programs. She also covered onsite dining opportunities for reuse for fast food chains and restaurants, and for hotels with soap & shampoo dispensers. However, the most innovative portion of the presentation covered the concept of a collocated wash hub at an MRF. This would allow single-use and reusable packaging to be collected at the curb, and to be processed at the same campus, providing the ability to easily transport packaging for reuse or recycling to the correct facility if materials inadvertently end up in the wrong stream. Upstream in partnership with Cyclei and the City of Berkeley is currently piloting the feasibility of a separate bag for reusables to be affixed to recycling



During lunch, the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of SWANA presented its annual scholarship awards. Mehal Trivedi of Frederick County (left) recognized this year's recipients, including Max Ozbolt (center), son of Joel Ozbolt of Howard County, who will be attending Syracuse University in the fall.

carts. Melissa highlighted the importance of how this type of reuse program can fit into existing curbside recycling programs and become funded under Maryland's EPR law.

Donnie Lewis at r.World Reusables provided a local level context for reusable cup and food ware services that his company rents out to sports venues, festivals and other closed loop, large-scale public event spaces in the Mid-Atlantic region. He noted the importance of automating processes and equipment as much as possible, as this will drive down reuse unit prices to make these systems scalable and affordable for customers. He pointed

out that some reusables are already becoming cost competitive with certain single-use compostable or aluminum alternatives.

Another breakout session titled: *From Landfill to Landmark: Transforming a Pre RCRA Site into a Community Asset*, highlighted the Gude Landfill remediation project, which has been underway since 2008 and is nearing completion. This presentation was delivered by Laura Oakes of EA Engineering and Diana McKenney of the Authority and covered the initial plans for the site from the 1980's, which included a horse paddock, and the final realized project of today. The project balanced the regulatory requirements for site remediation with input from the neighboring community, and the County's larger vision for the finished space. Details on the progress of the project can be found in past editions of WasteWatch.

The plenary session following lunch included legislative updates for the State of Maryland from Drew Vetter, a partner with Schwartz, Metz, Wise and Kaufmann, and Bradley Baker, Program Manager with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

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During the MRN annual business meeting lunch hour, Bob Stumpff (right) of College Park, MD led the proceedings which included the election of board leadership and installation of board members. During the meeting, Chaz Miller (left) presented Authority Project Manager Kitty McIlroy (center) with an award recognizing her service as MRN President. The award honored her leadership of the organization over the past three years, and her dedication to the solid waste and recycling profession, including the significant impact her work has had throughout the region.

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Both speakers discussed a series of bills that are likely to return in the next General Assembly session including a bottle bill, a mattress EPR bill, electronics EPR bill, and other EPR programs. The speakers also explained potential legislation that will inform public participation in the permitting process and fee structures that support MDE operations. Both Drew and Bradley noted that there will be a push to continue to address PFAS mitigation in the upcoming session.

Conference attendees then had the opportunity to gather in small groups to solve recycling outreach challenges and share strategies for increasing waste diversion. They also received a presentation from various members of MDE including Aneca Atkinson, Assistant Secretary of Environmental Justice, Ardenia Holland, Civic, Community & Public Engagement Coordinator, and Alex Lima, Civic, Community, and Public Engagement Coordinator, about the MDEnviroScreen, which is an environmental justice tool for the State of Maryland that will allow any member of the public to access important environmental and social justice information related to projects throughout the State of Maryland. More information on the tool can be found here: [MDEnviroScreen](#).

In another breakout session participants heard from Jacob Saffert of PaintCare and Shannon McDonald, Director of the Waste Diversion Division at MDE, on the new rollout of PaintCare in Maryland, which started on April 1. The presentation covered work that was done leading up to the launch, including program design, acceptance site recruiting, and contracting for the processing of the collected paints. Jacob shared some interesting facts, including that 10 percent of paint purchased by consumers is not utilized, highlighting why paint management programs are needed. It was noted that oil-based paints are primarily used for energy recovery, while latex based paints are recycled. Shannon solicited feedback from the audience on what aspects of the program, including collection site requirements like staffing and covered structures, could be improved, not just for PaintCare, but for other EPR programs that may be implemented in the future. Concurrently, attendees in the SWANA track heard about so-called “dirty” material recycling facilities (MRFs), which process and recover recyclable materials, and possibly organics, from mixed solid waste. The presentations from Jack Bernardino (AMP) and Spence Davenport (Digital Industrial and Recyclesaurus.com) focused

on emerging AI-enabled camera technologies and the performance of facilities that are currently operating.

The final general session of the day explored the advantages and disadvantages of AI in the solid waste and recycling industry. Maggie Orozco of Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) covered the benefits of AI in market outreach development, including its many different uses on social media applications. Ryan Hugel, of Closed Loop Partners and Jamie Lowrey, with Circular Services, spoke about the economic value of implementing AI in the solid waste and recycling industry to optimize material capture rates. During the question-and-answer session, the concerns about the environmental resource and labor impacts of AI were discussed. Both Ryan and Jamie concluded that certain advanced AI systems that could replace the most dangerous jobs in solid waste, such as humanoid robots, remain emerging technologies and are still being evaluated in real-world applications.

The conference concluded with a networking reception, providing attendees an opportunity to continue conversations and strengthen professional connections across the solid waste and recycling industry.



Attendees participated in conference voting session

GOVERNOR MOORE SIGNS BILL RE-ESTABLISHING LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY COMMISSION



n April 28, Maryland Governor Wes Moore signed [SB 553](#) / [HB 833](#), officially reestablishing the

Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety in Maryland. Authority staff, Kitty McIlroy, serving on the Commission, as then President and on behalf of the Maryland Recycling Network (MRN), joined fellow members of the Commission, for the bill signing, along with the bill sponsors, Senator Malcolm Augustine and Delegate Regina Boyce, partners from the Maryland Department of the Environment and others.

The Commission's membership comprises a diverse set of experts providing technical, public safety, environmental, and operational expertise. It is staffed by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The commission conducted a comprehensive study for making legislative, regulatory and best-practice recommendations

that address battery safety while supporting innovation and responsible energy use statewide. The new interim report is due in December of this year. A final report with findings and recommendations for the Governor and the General Assembly is due in December 2027.

For more details on MRN's support of the bill please visit the website [here](#). Additional details about the Commission from the State Fire Marshall are presented [here](#).

The Commission has four subcommittees:

1. Consumer and Transportation Applications.
2. Utility Applications, with review and consideration of the NFPA 855 Standards for Grid Scale Storage and Safety.
3. Prevent, detect and suppress lithium-ion fires at recycling facilities.

4. Reusing, recycling and decommissioning lithium-ion batteries.

The Commission made specific recommendations for continued research into the following concerns:

- Battery risks at the Port of Baltimore, and on roads, rails and tunnels throughout Maryland.
- Impacts of battery risks on insurance providers and insurance coverage availability.
- Maryland's current waste classifications for lithium-ion batteries and how they affect collection, storage and recycling as well as how this could be better addressed in the permitting and regulation of solid waste facilities.
- The integration of pending federal regulations and emerging third-party standards.

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Lithium-Ion Battery Safety Bill Signing

GOVERNOR MOORE SIGNS BILL RE-ESTABLISHING LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY COMMISSION

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Additionally, the re-establishment of the Commission called for adding new subject matter experts, including representatives from:

- The Maryland Port Administration
- The ocean freight shipping industry
- The Maryland Department of the Environment, Land and Materials Administration
- The property casualty and commercial insurance industries
- The Towing and Recovery Professionals of Maryland
- The Maryland Turfgrass Council

The Commission recommended the Maryland General Assembly

enact four Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs to encourage responsible battery collection, improve public awareness, finance battery fire detection and suppression equipment, reduce the financial burden of collection and recycling on taxpayers and government agencies, encourage design for reuse and recycling, and promote end-of-life management that protects the environment. The following task areas were recommended:

- Small and medium-format battery EPR (as an update to the State's existing battery laws).
- Small and medium-format battery embedded device/electronics EPR (as an update to the State's electronics EPR law).

- Electronic nicotine, cannabis, and other substance delivery systems (including e-cigarettes and vaporizers) in addition to single-use substance delivery system product bans and/or deposit systems.
- Vehicle traction batteries including hybrid-electric vehicle traction batteries and large-format vehicle traction batteries EPR.

The significance of the Commission's work can also be viewed through coverage the bill received. [Waste Dive](#), and the Northeast Recycling Council reported on the Commission's reestablishment ([here](#)).



AUTHORITY STAFF JOINS BALTIMORE COUNTY "RECYCLING IN ACTION" MRF TOUR

The Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) hosts [Recycling in Action Month](#) each May aiming "to demystify the recycling process" by opening the doors of recycling facilities throughout North America. Through guided tours, participants see exactly what happens after materials are placed in the bin—from collection and sorting to preparation for end markets. These tours help build public trust recycling systems while highlighting the people, technology, and investments that keep valuable materials in circulation and out of landfills. ([reported](#) by [SWANA](#).)

The Baltimore County Department of Public Works and Transportation hosted an event on May 5th that SWANA

and the Maryland Recycling Network (MRN) helped to promote. Attendees included Authority staff and then MRN President, Kitty McIlroy, SWANA CEO Amy Lestition Burke and Senior Director of Public Policy & Communications Kristyn Oldendorf as well as representatives from the SWANA Mid-Atlantic Chapter, the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Maryland Department of General Services and media outlets WMAR ([watch report here](#)) and WBAL. Also in attendance were local elected leaders Maryland State Delegates [Kathy Szeliga](#) and [Ryan Nawrocki](#), as well as staff from the office of Baltimore County Councilman [Julian Jones](#).

These tours help showcase the processes behind recycling. Participants, including public officials, observed sorting systems and skilled workers producing high-quality recyclables that support manufacturing and the circular economy, reinforcing that recycling is an effective and active process.

As reported [here](#), MRN notes that tours such as this help bring recycling to life while sparking conversation, building understanding, and strengthening recycling efforts across Maryland.

Other press from the event can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/BaltCoDPWT/posts/dpwts-solid-waste-management-bureau-invited-elected-officials-local-and-state-en/856317660842868/>



Recycling in Action MRF tour participants

SAVE THE DATE

2026 MWMA Fall Summit - United States Conference of Mayors

The Municipal Waste Management Association will have its Fall Summit October 26 – October 28, 2026, in Baltimore, MD. The summit is a gathering of the solid waste and recycling professionals from around the Country.

COMING SOON:

Request for Expressions of Interest for Building Material, Pallet, Furniture, Appliance and House Good Reuse and Construction and Demolition Recycling



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