

October 28, 2021

Re: COG Support for Recycling Funding in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R.3684)

Dear Members of the National Capital Region Congressional Delegation,

On behalf of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), I am writing to offer our support for H.R. 3684. We endorse this legislation as passed by the Senate on August 10 as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which contains funding targeted to improve recycling programs. As the association of local governments in metropolitan Washington, COG supports efforts to increase education about recycling in order to assist the region in meeting its medium and long-term climate change goals, which align with our 2021 Legislative Priorities.

In recent years, dramatically fluctuating recycling markets have put economic pressure on jurisdictions in the metropolitan Washington region. Import restrictions on recyclables initiated by China, Indonesia, and other countries over the past three years have caused market downturns that are just now beginning to turn favorable. Residents continue to express confusion about what to put in the recycling bin. It is clear to local governments that better public education is needed to reduce contamination in the recycling stream. The effect is a better salable product to minimize the impact of future market downturns.

H.R. 3684 contains language from the earlier RECYCLE Act, which authorizes a new EPA grant program to educate Americans about their recycling programs. COG members support H.R.3684 and similar legislation which distributes financial resources to states and local governments to stabilize and enhance recycling infrastructure and education during these times of changing recyclables markets. Recycling is a multi-billion dollar sector of the economy and the region does not want to regress in the area of learned-public-recycling-behavior that local governments have worked so hard to teach.

We urge you to support H.R.3684, and similar legislation that will offer stability to the recycling markets and allow local governments to keep citizens educated in a changing recycling landscape.

Please contact Tom Gates, COG Deputy Executive Director, at tgates@mwkog.org or (202)962-3363 if you have questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Deni Taveras
Chair, COG Climate, Energy and Environment Committee
Prince George's County