

**Prince George's County
Solid Waste Advisory Commission c/o
Kevin Roy Serrona
3500 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772**

April 23, 2025

Honorable Eric Olson
Chair, TIEE Committee
County Council
Wayne K. Curry Administration Building, 2nd floor
1301 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774

Dear Council Member Olson,

I am writing on behalf of the Prince George's County Solid Waste Advisory Commission (SWAC) to provide feedback on the Prince George's County budget for FY 2026. Please provide this document with other Committee and Council Members as appropriate.

The SWAC has two primary areas of concern. Additionally, we have questions that the Resource Recovery Division staff of the Department of the Environment have not been able to answer and I am sending them as separate correspondence to request assistance in identifying whom or what department may assist us.

Our first and primary concern is the management of landfill gas (primarily methane – the most potent contributor to the climate crisis). Our concerns are the following:

A. Landfill Construction and Methane Management

Prince George's County is constructing a new "cell" – AREA C in the valley of the currently existing landfill (Brownfield Station Road Sanitary Landfill) to extend the life of said landfill by approximately 50 years. Funds for the construction of this project are in this year's budget. While we understand that the current plan for the new cell will meet State requirements for the control and management of methane we offer the following for consideration as we currently understand it:

- a. There is insufficient planning for *the short term capture* of methane that is emitted in the early operational stages of the cell (up to the first 5 years or so). The impact is increased odors to the communities close to the landfill (not methane) and increased loss of methane captured and more greenhouse gas escaping into the environment.
- b. We understand that BSRSL like most landfills still have a significant loss of methane gas in spite of the current efforts to capture it. We believe that the operation could significantly improve methane capture with use of the improved technology currently available but not in use at BSRSL. We recommend the broadest possible methane emissions monitoring in real time, identifying, and repairing landfill cover failures, capturing, collection, and beneficial use of all landfill gas.

- c. Although the County is currently reviewing RFP's for a beneficial gas project; this project has been on hold and stalled for the last 7 years. This has resulted in a loss of revenue for the capture and sale or use of methane to the amount of more than \$1,000,000 per year (the gas has been "flared" and not used or sold during this time).
- For example, a new landfill gas to energy facility in Corpus Christi, Texas modestly expected to generate a \$1,000,000 in revenues from their newly constructed facility. They were surprised at the end of the first year, that the amount of gas captured was 4 times as much leading to 4.6 million in profits and \$230,000 reduction in operating and maintenance costs. The facility was constructed in less than 2 years.
 - The SWAC would like to ensure that the County contracts with the most effective producer who can also ensure a fast time line on getting the facility constructed and operating to increase revenue, reduce the carbon footprint and increase its sustainability. We know this is possible and given revenue concerns we urge consideration of using landfill gas to generate proceeds.
 - It is also unclear to the SWAC whether the new gas processor will include gas from all possible sources on the BFSL site – both closed sections (A & B) and the new Area C. We recommend the broadest possible collection of all landfill gas (both methane and carbon monoxide).
- d. Food scrap collection
- The County has delivered approximately 180,000 food scrap carts to the residents of Prince George's County in the unincorporated areas.
 - The percentage of food waste collected at the organics facility is extremely low (4.2 %) through this countywide collection process.
 - The County's process for determining the percentage of food waste in the collection carts is done by a quarterly composition study of 2 random trucks of combined yard waste and food waste. We believe that this process needs to be more fine-tuned to better determine how to improve participation to divert organics from the landfill. We would like to see improved and expanded system of measuring food waste to determine how to improve participation and volume of food waste collected.

B. Community Outreach

The County provides community outreach on various aspects of solid waste management programs and services. The SWAC has requested detailed information about the County's outreach planning which has not been sufficiently provided. Additionally, the SWAC has raised ongoing concerns about the "messaging" in the outreach that does not sufficiently address the reasons "why" community members should do everything possible to increase and improve recycling, food and yard waste and litter management.

- a. The SWAC is recommending a comprehensive and holistic approach to the community outreach messaging that emphasizes not only "how" to recycle or collect food scraps but focus on explaining the impact on the climate crisis and the short and medium term impacts on our local community (pollution, health problems, flooding and other weather effects).

- b. We are recommending the implementation of process that encourage public input to community outreach plans, messaging and the provision of data on its effectiveness.
- c. The SWAC would like to see plans and how the County measures its efforts through the community outreach program.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on our concerns and recommendations that may help the County become an even more effective agent in managing its solid waste in the most sustainable and cost effective manner.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Meyer
Chair

CC:

Kenneth Battle, Director TIEE
Julio Murillo, Chief of Staff, District 3
Barbara Sollner-Webb, SWAC
Dave Brosch, SWAC
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