

February 10, 2025  
10 year plan - Zero Waste Testimony

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[REDACTED]

## PAY FOR WHAT YOU TOSS

I applaud the county for their goal and working towards zero waste. I also agree that we should implement a unit pricing initiative for our trash. It has been demonstrated that this will significantly reduce the volume of trash that we produce. It would be important to include a Save As You Throw section in the plan. Clearly the county would have to change their fee structure. With a program requiring us to pay for our own trash each one of us would be motivated to reduce our trash if we had to pay for what we are tossing. Those of us who are careful and use less would pay less than those of us who throw lots of junk away. It is my understanding that a pilot program in Carroll County reduced residential trash by 40%. Going from a set service fee to unit pricing will require significant changes in charging. I hope this can be explored and implemented. It clearly works. It should be addressed in the 10-year plan.

I am also concerned about the advisability of choosing a system that requires the purchase of all new plastic bins for every household in the county. Hoping that the plastic bins would be made out of recycled plastic and that the old bins would be used until their usefulness is exhausted. Perhaps some residents would prefer to use recycled bags which could fit into their already existing bins. This may reduce the number of new plastic bins required. Pay as you toss does motivate people to toss less. Hopefully, even with the charge, our residents would comply with the system. I think most would because of the curbside convenience.

It might be useful to have some kind of an "opt out" program where the resident would pay a flat rate. As I understand it, one of the roadblocks that save as you throw programs have encountered is when a handful of vocal residents complain about being required to move to this system. When an "opt out" plan is offered, this eliminates those critical voices because they can choose not to participate. This system has worked in large programs in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. My request then is for the DEP to look closely at the methodology they are choosing and incorporate this into the 10-year solid waste plan.