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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 143 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY SCHWANK, HUGHES, ARGALL, FONTANA, KEARNEY,  
SANTARSIERO, YUDICHAK, BREWSTER, COMMITTA, GORDNER, SABATINA,  
MUTH, COSTA AND KANE, JULY 6, 2021

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REFERRED TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, JULY 6, 2021

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A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to  
2 conduct a study and issue a report regarding recycling in  
3 this Commonwealth and the feasibility of creating targeted  
4 recycling economic development zone programs in this  
5 Commonwealth.

6 WHEREAS, The act of July 28, 1988 (P.L.556, No.101), known as  
7 the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act,  
8 required municipalities with specified populations to implement  
9 recycling programs; and

10 WHEREAS, Currently, 1,930 of Pennsylvania's 2,700  
11 municipalities have a recycling program, serving 94% of the  
12 population of this Commonwealth; and

13 WHEREAS, The Recycling Partnership's 2020 State of Curbside  
14 Recycling Report found that only 32% of materials are being  
15 recycled nationally; and

16 WHEREAS, While that recycling rate might seem to be  
17 acceptable, it does not approach the levels that many  
18 policymakers hoped for and it masks some of the severe  
19 challenges currently facing the recycling industry; and

1       WHEREAS, There is widespread agreement among business owners  
2 in the recycling industry, recycling professionals, municipal  
3 officials and environmental advocates that the recycling  
4 industry now confronts a multitude of issues, including  
5 dwindling markets, material contamination and escalating program  
6 costs; and

7       WHEREAS, There are reports that recyclable materials are  
8 simply being placed in landfills because markets for collected  
9 materials are lacking; and

10       WHEREAS, The difficulties facing the recycling industry  
11 nationally are consistent with the difficulties in this  
12 Commonwealth, and this reality does not make sense economically  
13 or environmentally; therefore be it

14       RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Legislative Budget and  
15 Finance Committee to conduct a study and issue a report  
16 regarding recycling in this Commonwealth and the feasibility of  
17 creating targeted recycling economic development zone programs  
18 in this Commonwealth; and be it further

19       RESOLVED, That the study explore ways of improving the  
20 economic and environmental viability of recycling in this  
21 Commonwealth, including enhancing markets for recycled materials  
22 and developing recycling economic development programs in this  
23 Commonwealth as other states have done; and be it further

24       RESOLVED, That the study address how other states, such as  
25 California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Maine, Michigan,  
26 Minnesota, Missouri and Ohio, have recycling assistance  
27 resources for businesses; and be it further

28       RESOLVED, That the study:

29           (1) explore best practices in local government  
30       contracting, such as zero waste authorities;

- 1           (2) examine methods of investing in local recycling  
2           infrastructure;
- 3           (3) research how recycling can be structured to better  
4           benefit local economies;
- 5           (4) examine material collection policy to address  
6           highest and best use of materials, such as guidelines as to  
7           what packaging producers can label as "recycled"; and
- 8           (5) examine public education strategies to reduce  
9           contamination of materials in the recycling stream, which  
10          makes it difficult for material recovery facilities to  
11          economically bring materials to market;
- 12          and be it further

13          RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
14          prepare a report of the findings and recommendations of the  
15          study and submit the report to the Secretary of the Senate and  
16          the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives within one year  
17          of the adoption of this resolution.