
From: Carolyn Parsa <carolyn.parsa@mdsierra.org>
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2025 6:40 PM
To: Walsh, Elizabeth; Ball, Calvin; Jones, Opel; Rigby, Christiana; Jung, Debra; Yungmann, David; CouncilMail
Subject: Sierra Club Testimony CR186-2025
Attachments: HoCo Sierra Club Testimony CR186 10-20-2025 final.pdf

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County Legislators,

Please find the Howard County Sierra Club testimony attached for CR186-2025. Thank you.

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Carolyn Parsa
Sierra Club Howard County Chair



October 20, 2025

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: CR186-2025

Members of the County Council,

The Howard County Sierra Club is in support of passing CR186-2025 introduced by Christiana Rigby. This resolution would amend the Howard County 2025-2034 Solid Waste Management Plan to add a study of the feasibility, benefits, and requirements for a Pay as You Throw (PAYT) program.

Under PAYT, households are charged different rates for waste collection based on the amount of waste they throw away, in the same way that they are charged for electricity, gas, and other utilities. This can be accomplished through multiple ways, including offering different sized trash collection containers. PAYT gives residents greater control over their costs and provides a direct economic incentive for residents to reduce waste. Currently, residents who generate less trash either through recycling or composting are paying for neighbors that generate two or even three times as much waste. It's not an equitable system: everyone pays the same amount, no matter how much or how little trash they actually produce. With PAYT residents who reduce, recycle, and compost are rewarded with a lower trash bill.¹

The first goal in the 10 year Solid Waste Plan is to implement programs that promote material reduction. It is well documented in cities and counties around the country, and specifically in Maryland, that PAYT programs can be a useful and successful tool in municipal waste reduction, and can start the important process of reducing waste at the household level. A PAYT program has the potential to change the way people think about trash. When residents shift their focus to the quantity of household waste, they are likely to change their purchasing habits. Product packaging and product quality are likely to become more important considerations with each purchase. For example, residents might opt for reusable items instead of single-use items. They may consider repairing things instead of purchasing new ones. And, they may be more likely to donate unwanted items instead of throwing them away. A PAYT program gives residents an incentive to reduce what they are sending to the landfill.

Carroll County implemented a pilot program called "Fair Trash Reduction" in New Windsor in 2018. In two months, the town saw a 44 % reduction in trash, and the recycling rate almost doubled.

¹ <https://archive.epa.gov/wastes/conserve/tools/payt/web/pdf/payas1.pdf>

While some residents were initially concerned that illegal dumping rates might increase, they did not find that to be the case. The town saved \$30,000 for the year.²

Montgomery County has implemented a Save as You Throw (SAYT) program, which began on June 26, 2025, in specific neighborhoods.³ Their program includes offering two sizes of trash bins, 35 and 65 gallons. The results of this pilot plan will be helpful to Howard County's planning.

On June 16, 2025, the city of Greenbelt's City Council unanimously passed a SAYT pilot program to be implemented beginning January 1, 2026. The goals of the program are waste reduction and promotion of equity, by matching costs with usage. The city also has a successful food scrap diversion program.⁴

A Howard County SAYT or PAYT program will likely increase participation in both the recycling and the food scrap diversion program, as people become more mindful and cost conscious of what goes into the trash. They may put more effort into alternatives such as reduce, reuse, repurpose, repair, and donation of items before throwing them in the trash.

It is one of the main goals of the Howard County 10 year plan to increase food scrap collection and composting. Therefore, it would be a great benefit if Howard County's Green Bin program participation rose as a result of implementing a PAYT program.

Based on information gained about successfully implementing the program in other jurisdictions in Maryland, Howard County can and should evaluate the program for implementation here. Our landfill space is filling up, and we need to take significant steps to waste reduction. PAYT would be a useful tool to reach the County's goals and should be added to the 10 year plan.

We would recommend using the term Save as You Throw (SAYT) not only because it conveys a more positive message, but also because it is more accurate as there is the opportunity for residents to save money by throwing away less trash.

We respectfully ask you to pass CR186-2025.

Carolyn Parsa, Chair
Howard County Sierra Club
carolyn.parsa@mdsierra.org

² <https://ilsr.org/articles/payt-pilot-carroll-county-md/>

³ <https://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/Solutions.aspx?SolutionId=1-9THHV4>

⁴ <https://www.greenbeltdmd.gov/610/Save-As-You-Throw-SAYT-Program>

From: Ryan Powers <rpowerz115@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:39 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Testimony: CR186-2025 Favorable with Amendments
Attachments: HCCA_Testimony_CR186-2025_Pay_As_You_Throw.pdf

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Dear Council Members,

The following is the testimony given in support of CR186. It is also attached to this email.
https://howardcountyhcca.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/HCCA_Testimony_CR186-2025_Pay_As_You_Throw.pdf

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Good Evening Council Members,

My name is Ryan Powers; I'm from Glenwood speaking on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association. We are in support of CR186-2025 with the following amendments:

- 1) Change Pay As You Throw (PAYT) to Save As You Throw (SAYT). If the study is meant to save Howard County and residents money, the title should reflect this. Residents don't want to "pay", they want to know they can "save".
- 2) This program should be voluntary. Residents should be able to see the savings generated and not feel as if this is a tax increase.
- 3) Ensure a minimum price for this study. The fiscal note for this resolution states a price tag of approximately \$30,000.
- 4) Consider forming a resident task force or committee for buy-in to this project. Although the study is relatively inexpensive, Pay As You Throw programs will require a large amount of initial startup costs. HCCA does not favor a top down study where the results are given to us with little to no time for residents to discuss the merits and concerns of this program. There are privacy issues, enforcement issues, and costs to vulnerable populations that a group of residents will be better able to point out. We also don't believe large families should be essentially penalized if implemented and that this should be taken into account.

Although we have these recommendations, a **Pay As You Throw program is worth studying**. These programs are expected to reduce Montgomery County's solid waste by 10% and on average around the world have resulted in 44% less waste going to landfills. Solid Waste management costs are only going to go up and recycling tends to cost less. This is a good opportunity to help Howard County keep costs down, possibly reduce costs on the individual taxpayer, and of course, most importantly, help the environment.

The HCCA wants to thank Council Member Rigby's office for their prompt response to our initial questions on CR186-2025.

Thank you for your time,

Ryan Powers, HCCA Board member



Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961... The Voice of the People of Howard County

Good Evening Council Members,

My name is Ryan Powers; I'm from Glenwood speaking on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association. We are in support of CR186-2025 with the following amendments:

- 1) Change Pay As You Throw (PAYT) to Save As You Throw (SAYT). If the study is meant to save Howard County and residents money, the title should reflect this. Residents don't want to "pay", they want to know they can "save".
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- 3) Ensure a minimum price for this study. The fiscal note for this resolution states a price tag of approximately \$30,000.
- 4) Consider forming a resident task force or committee for buy-in to this project. Although the study is relatively inexpensive, Pay As You Throw programs will require a large amount of initial startup costs. HCCA does not favor a top down study where the results are given to us with little to no time for residents to discuss the merits and concerns of this program. There are privacy issues, enforcement issues, and costs to vulnerable populations that a group of residents will be better able to point out. We also don't believe large families should be essentially penalized if implemented and that this should be taken into account.

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Ryan Powers, HCCA Board member