

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Mary Isaacson

DATE: March 25, 2019

SUBJECT: Municipal Waste Recycling Fee

Pennsylvania is one of the nation's largest waste importers, accepting municipal waste from residences and commercial facilities and residual waste from factories, manufacturers, farms and mining operations from other states across the Country. Waste management in our state is driven by market forces, and a blend of history, geography, law, economics and commerce has created Pennsylvania's "trashy" reputation.

The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 established statewide recycling requirements in Pennsylvania. Under this act, landfill and incinerator operators are required to pay a \$2 per ton recycling fee on waste received at their landfills. Revenue from the fee is allocated to municipalities for the planning, processing, resource recovery, and recycling of solid waste.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, more than 11.6 million residents of the Commonwealth currently have access to recycling programs and services. Of the 11.6 million residents, nearly 79 percent have access to recycling through roughly 1,050 curbside pickup programs located statewide. There are an additional 870 drop-off programs offered for residents living in rural areas and communities.

Unfortunately, because the recycling fee has not been increased since the enactment of this law over 30 years ago, many communities now struggle to keep up with the rising costs associated with recycling programs. As a result, more and more recyclable items are being sent to incinerators and landfills.

To help address this issue, I will be introducing legislation that would increase the recycling fee that landfill operators pay from \$2 per ton to \$5 per ton on waste received at their landfills. Due to the fact that the fee has not been increased in over three decades, this increase in fee is about \$1 per decade.

I believe it is vitally important that the Commonwealth's residents be provided with proper recycling programs and services. Please consider joining me in support of this important measure.