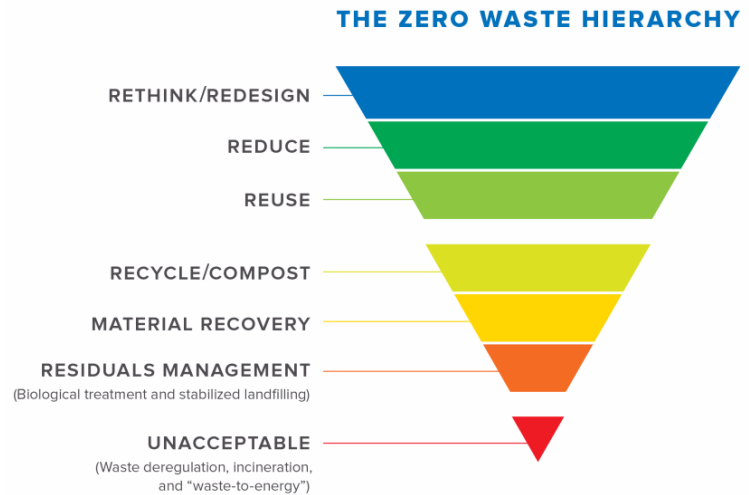


Energy Justice Network Recommendations to move Baltimore toward Zero Waste

1) Follow the Zero Waste Hierarchy. City council [unanimously passed resolutions](#) on 6/5/2017 and 5/14/2018 calling for the city to adopt a zero waste plan, and to explicitly follow the Zero Waste Hierarchy, which calls for no incineration and a range of upstream and downstream solutions. DPW has ignored these, but needs to honor city council's direction. See the official definition of [Zero Waste](#) and the [Zero Waste Hierarchy](#) attached. If DPW is unwilling to use this guiding principle, consider creating a new Division of Materials Management within another agency to guide this work, with DPW merely implementing it.



2) Prohibit DPW from renewing any waste disposal contract with Wheelabrator Baltimore. Knowing that the newly-elected County Executive in Montgomery County was determined to end use of their incinerator, the outgoing County Executive sneaked through a 5-year contract extension without informing County Council, and it was signed by their equivalent agency to DPW.

3) Get the bins right. The city gave everyone large green trash bins, but charges for small yellow recycling bins. This is the wrong size, color, AND cost. The city should repurpose the green bins to be recycling bins, provide smaller black trash cans, and provide brown composting bins to start curbside composting collection. Experience from other cities has shown that the size of the bins matters, and that collecting trash once every two weeks is an effective way to get people to compost (with composting and recycling collected weekly). San Francisco uses 64-gallon blue recycling bins, 32-gallon green composting bins, and 16-gallon black trash bins.¹



4) Unit Pricing (pay per bag). The most effective, and cost-effective², way to quickly reduce waste is known as "Pay as You Throw" (PAYT) or "Save as You Throw" – where you pay for each bag of trash you put out, but recycling and composting are collected for free. 10,000 communities in the U.S. do this. Where they do, they find an immediate 44% reduction in the amount of trash sent to disposal. It even encourages reduction, as there is a 28% decrease in total discards (waste plus recycling).³ Nothing works better, and it's only fair. With electricity, gas, and water, we pay for how much we use. However, with waste, our neighbor can put out 10 bags a week and pay the same as you do if you put out just one. The city needs to focus on how to adopt Save as You Throw ASAP, including for multi-family residents. Montgomery County is exploring this, and just shared some great presentations by [SERA](#) and [Waste Zero](#).⁴

¹ <https://www.recology.com/recology-san-francisco/san-francisco-service-updates/#/info>

² <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SWS/Resources/Files/master-plan/pay-as-you-throw-sera.pdf> – see slide 5 (top right on p2)

³ <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SWS/Resources/Files/master-plan/pay-as-you-throw-waste-zero.pdf> – see slides 8 and 17. Slide 8 shows the immediate drop in waste disposal of 44% on average, and shows the results from Sanford, ME, where waste disposal fell dramatically upon starting PAYT, rose again once it was canceled, then dropped again once it was re-adopted. Slide 17 shows that it's not just shifting waste to recycling, but as waste disposal drops 44%, waste plus recyclables also drops 28%, showing the impact of PAYT on people reducing consumption.

⁴ <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SWS/master-plan.html> (see the last two links under "Presentations" at the bottom of the page)

The presentations also show financial savings, and that illegal dumping is more fears than reality. The presenters also answered the concern about low-income large families, and explained that there are ways to reduce the impact on these families. The Waste Zero organization would be great to consult with the city to develop a program. Carroll County is working with them to do that right now.

5) Curbside composting collection. This is critical to keep the gas-forming materials out of the landfill, to avoid odors, leachate, toxic exposure from chemicals escaping with landfill gas, and climate impacts. To get people composting food scraps, you need to have trash picked up every two weeks, and composting and recycling weekly. People get the point when they notice that what stinks in their trash is the food scraps, and if they want it not to stink, they need to put it in the proper bin that is collected more often.

6) Ban single use plastics. The city is off to a good start by banning Styrofoam. Toxic PVC plastic, plastic bags, straws, and other problem materials should be next. Washington, DC just started enforcing their law banning plastic straws.

7) Build a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Baltimore. A MRF is a recycling sorting center. It creates 10 times as many jobs as incineration or landfilling. See the attached information on Recology in San Francisco. The cost of doing so is cheaper than each phase of the city's proposed landfill expansion.

Building a Recycling MRF in Baltimore	\$41,601,747
Phase 1 of Quarantine Road Landfill Expansion	\$56,389,120
Phase 2 of Quarantine Road Landfill Expansion	\$43,289,020
DPW 2018 Budget	\$1,447,835,441

8) Deconstruct, don't demolish. More jobs and less waste comes from carefully dismantling buildings rather than demolishing them. Materials can be reused and recycled. The city should mandate deconstruction in place of demolition, and require use of recovered/recycled materials in new construction. See more on deconstruction from the [Building Materials Reuse Association](#) and the [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#). We can help build more local companies like [Baltimore's Second Chance](#).

9) Fix the back end. Advocate for Material Recovery and Biological Treatment (MRBT) prior to landfilling. This is the best way to deal with "leftovers" on the path to zero waste. See the [report on this topic by Ecocycle](#). Basically, this means – after source separating compostables and recyclables – mechanically removing recyclables people leave in the trash, and stabilizing the organic fraction with anaerobic digestion before landfilling, to avoid having a gassy, stinky landfill.⁵

10) Don't study bad ideas. DPW needs to instruct Geosyntec NOT to pointlessly study bad ideas that City Council has already condemned in its May 2018 resolution (but are in their scope of work), including:

- reporting on the supposed benefits of incineration (and none of the harms)
- building a new experimental type of incinerator (gasification) that is even more expensive and doesn't work at commercial scale
- "solid recovered fuel production" – basically turning trash into burnable pellets, like the defeated Energy Answers incinerator would have burned
- privatizing the city's public Quarantine Road Landfill, mining it, or rapidly filling it up on purpose
- mixed waste processing (not separating recyclables at the source, but expecting machines and low-wage workers to sort it all... which results in unsalable recyclables)

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⁵ <https://www.ecocycle.org/specialreports/leftovers>