



**Testimony Supporting HB-209
Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters Committees
February 11, 2020**

Hon. Kumar P. Barve, Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Hon. Dereck E. Davis, Chair, Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Barve, Chairman Davis, and Committee Members:

We are a citizen organization originally founded to oppose an incinerator project that was set to be built jointly by Frederick and Carroll Counties, in Frederick County. After a number of years, we prevailed, and both counties have been working on ways to manage “waste” that make better sense than to burn it.

We are passionate about improving all of the ways individuals and municipalities handle “waste” — which is more appropriately referred to as “resources.”

The use of single use plastics, including bags, is a crisis that individuals and municipalities must face head on. Our oceans and all waterways are affected by the pollution from plastic bags, and the increasing effects on fish and other water based animals are dire.

Naturally, when plastic in our water is ingested by fish, humans and other animals up the food chain subsequently take those plastic particles and toxins into their bodies as well.

Why should we continue to allow this?

It is shocking to realize that about ONE TRILLION plastic shopping bags are used each year, worldwide! And only once... for 15 minutes, on average. This is simply unsustainable.

Before the advent of plastic bags — not so long ago — shoppers managed to shop without them. Yes, paper bags are not ideal, either, but the point is that we can manage without plastic bags; without automatically-offered and “free” bags to carry our wares, humans will adapt and use reusable bags, without anywhere near the kind of disruptions to our planet that we are causing by using plastic bags. If stores charge 10 cents for a reusable bag or a paper bag, it will further the human behavioral change needed to shift to reusable bags being the norm.

What a relief to our ecosystem this change would be!

Legislators: let’s do this. Please issue a favorable report on HB-209.

Many thanks for your attention and consideration.

Patrice Gallagher, Board President

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THE FREDERICK ZERO WASTE ALLIANCE REPRESENTS CITIZENS IN FREDERICK COUNTY WHOSE GOAL IS TO REDUCE OUR COMMUNITY’S SOLID WASTE TO A MINIMUM, USING ENVIRONMENTALLY AND ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE METHODS.