



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 1442

Environment- Expanded Polystyrene Food Service Products- Definition

DATE: March 4, 2020

CBF POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) OPPOSES HB 1442. This bill would exclude expanded polystyrene egg cartons shipped into or within the State from the State's polystyrene prohibition.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed SB285, the prohibition of the distribution of expanded polystyrene food service products including food containers, plates, hot and cold beverage cups, trays AND cartons for eggs and other food items.

Last year's legislation addressed the overwhelming amount of expanded polystyrene clogging waterways and blowing around neighborhoods around the State. The bill also set the standard statewide after other jurisdictions, Montgomery County, Prince George's, District of Columbia and Baltimore already enacted local prohibitions on expanded polystyrene food service products around the Bay watershed.

Expanded polystyrene (also known as foam) is one of the most commonly found types of litter across Maryland. Much of this litter makes its way to local rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Evidence and studies suggest that polystyrene packaging breaks into smaller pieces over time in the environment, giving rise to "microplastics." These "microplastics" can be found in the Bay and its waterways in abundance, mimicking the natural food of marine life. If consumed by juvenile fish and crabs, these particles prevent natural digestion and buoyancy leading to death.

The Chesapeake Bay Program Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the issue thoroughly and made broad recommendations on removing micro-plastic pollution at its source as the only cost-effective solution to the problem. Microplastics can also cause an imbalance in the food chain in Chesapeake Bay, disrupting the primary food source for many marine animals. The breakdown of expanded polystyrene in our environment can negatively impact the food and habitat of marine life in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

HB 1442 would backtrack on current laws and be detrimental to the health of the Bay. **For this reason, CBF OPPOSES HB 1442 and urges an UNFAVORABLE report from the Environment and Transportation Committee.** For more information, please contact Carmera Thomas, Baltimore Program Manager at 443.482.2011 or carmerathomas@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 107,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.