



Testimony on: HB0168 – Environment – Environment - Plastic Products - Postconsumer Recycled Content Program
Bill Sponsor: Delegates Terrasa, Hill, Lehman, Palakovich Carr, Ruth, Solomon, and Wu
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Organization: Less Plastic Please
Submitting: Liz Feighner
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 7, 2024

[Less Plastic Please](#) is a Howard County based grassroots organization representing more than 200 subscribers. We are also a partner of the [Zero Waste Team](#) of [Howard County Sierra Club](#) and a [Beyond Plastics](#) Affiliate

Less Plastic Please supports HB168 and the goal of increasing post-consumer content in these items: plastic beverage containers, rigid plastic containers used to package or store food, and plastic containers used for household cleaning products or personal care.

Reducing the production of plastics and creating a zero-waste economy is one of our top concerns. Less Plastic Please spearheaded campaigns with several organizations in Howard County to advocate for reducing single-use plastics through two successful bills, [Plastic Bag Fee](#) and [Plastic Reduction Law](#). We also hosted a [webinar on the Story of Plastics in 2020](#). As we highlighted during the discussion, plastic pollution is an environmental justice and public health crisis: Fracking, plastics production, litter, and disposal in landfills and by incineration harm communities of color disproportionately. We believe that social justice, racial justice and environmental justice are all part of a single, globally connected Movement for Justice.

HB168 establishes the Post-consumer Recycled Content Program in the Maryland Department of the Environment’s (MDE) Office of Recycling. The goal of the Program is to increase post-consumer content in plastic containers, specifically, beverage containers, rigid containers used to package or store food, and household cleaning product or personal care product containers. The bill requires a producer of these containers sold, offered for sale, or distributed in the State to meet minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements; register with MDE; and pay an annual fee to cover Program costs.

Plastic production continues to grow. In addition to the doubling of production over the past two decades, forecasts see production tripling by 2050. Nearly 3 billion PET and more than 176 million

HDPE plastic beverage containers were sold in Maryland in 2019 and fewer than a quarter were actually recycled and made into new products. Increasing the requirement for post-consumer content will reduce new plastic container production and strengthen the market for recycled content. Substituting new PET with recycled PET would reduce the amount of fossil fuels needed and could lower the energy requirements and the resulting pollution by as much as 75%. Maryland should follow the lead of other states like New Jersey, California, Connecticut, and Washington in requiring more post-consumer recycled content in plastic containers.

HB168 will reduce production of new plastic and its environmental damage. As companies use more recycled content, less new plastic will be created, reducing the demand for fracked gas and the pollution and greenhouse gas emissions associated with it. The tragic train derailment in Palestine, OH carrying toxic chemicals used to make plastics is a reminder of threats we face because of our reliance on virgin plastic.

We urge a favorable report for HB168.

Submitted by Liz Feighner

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