



NATIONAL AQUARIUM[®]

Date: February 5, 2024

Bill: HB 168 Environment – Plastic products – Postconsumer recycled content program

Position: Support

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests your support for **House Bill 168: Environment – Plastic Products – Postconsumer Recycled Content Program**, which would establish standards for minimum post-consumer content of recycled material in certain plastic containers.

Stopping plastic pollution is one of the National Aquarium's three strategic conservation goals. The plastic pollution crisis has been well-documented as global plastic production has outpaced any other manufactured material, with a substantial portion of plastics manufactured used for packaging; and more than half of all plastic ever made now accumulating in landfills or in the environment¹. Plastic packaging makes up about 28% of our waste stream, and the U.S. is one of the world's top generators of new plastic production and plastic waste.² In addition to the impacts that plastic pollution has on wildlife and human health, annual greenhouse gas emissions at every stage of the plastic lifecycle contribute to climate change. If plastic production and use grow as projected, by 2030 the related emissions would be equivalent to nearly three hundred new coal-fired power plants.³

Addressing the many harmful impacts of the plastic pollution crisis requires comprehensive systemic change. Maryland must enact additional policies that encourage behavior change; clean up existing pollution; invest in education and outreach; and support reduced production of and demand for plastic. Multiple studies have demonstrated that when compared to their virgin content counterparts, materials made with post-consumer recycled content have lower environmental impacts including reduced total energy demand, less smog formation, and less toxicity to people and wildlife.

A requirement for post-consumer recycled content in plastic containers will improve market demand for recycled material and contribute to reduced demand for harmful new plastic production. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 168.**

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¹ Geyer, R. et al. 2017. Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. Science Advances (3):7.
<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.1700782>

² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26132>.

³ Center for International Environmental Law 2019. Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet.
www.ciel.org/plasticandclimate