



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

**Testimony on HB0168 - Environment – Plastic Products –
Postconsumer Recycled Content Program**

Hearing Date: Feb. 7, 2024

Bill Sponsor: Delegates Terrasa, Hill, Lehman, Palakovich Carr, Ruth, Solomon, and Wu

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,400 subscribers. It is also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

Howard County Climate Action supports HB0168 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.

The interconnected climate and plastic pollution crises are one of our top concerns. HoCo Climate Action worked 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.

Plastic is made from fossil fuels. It generates greenhouse gas pollution throughout its life cycle, from extraction of fossil fuels, to plastic production, to disposal. By increasing recycled content in plastic containers, we reduce the amount of new plastic used, reduce greenhouse gas pollution, divert waste from landfills and incinerators, and save energy. Substituting new PET with recycled PET would reduce the amount of fossil fuels needed and could lower the energy requirements and resulting pollution by as much as 75%, according to the [National Association for PET Container Resources \(NAPCOR\)](#).

Plastic production continues to grow. In addition to the doubling of production over the past two decades, forecasts see production tripling by 2050. Today, packaging is 28% of our waste, and 40% of that is plastic.

Strengthening use of recycled content instills greater consumer confidence and builds trust in recycling programs. These are critical to encouraging recycling participation and reducing litter. This bill would establish goals for recycled content, improve environmental outcomes and

strengthen recycling progress in Maryland, echoing approaches in states such as New Jersey, California, Connecticut, and Washington..

HB0168 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 plastic.

We urge a favorable report for HB0168.

Howard County Climate Action

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee

www.HoCoClimateAction.org

HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com