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February 19, 2020

**House Bill 354**

**To:** Members of the House Economic Matters and House Environment & Transportation Committees

**From:** Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

**Re:** HOUSE BILL 354 – Solid Waste Management – Personal Cleansing Products Provided at Lodging Establishments – Prohibition

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chairman Davis, Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Dumais, Vice-Chair Stein and Members of the Committees, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration **supports** House Bill 354.

House Bill 354 would prohibit an owner, an operator, or a manager of a lodging establishment from providing certain personal cleansing product in a certain small plastic bottle under certain circumstances and authorize an owner, an operator, or a manager of a lodging establishment to provide personal cleansing products in a certain plastic bottle under certain circumstances.

House Bill 354 would prohibit an owner, operator, or manager of a lodging establishment that has 51 or more guest rooms from providing without charge a personal cleansing product in a small plastic bottle to their guests or members of the public in the lodging rooms, bathrooms, or shared bathrooms, unless specifically requested by their guests. A small plastic bottle is defined as a plastic bottle or container that is less than 6 ounces in capacity and is intended to be non-reusable by the end user. The bill gives lodging

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establishments until January 1, 2023 to comply with the provision, providing ample time to transition away from small plastic bottles and use up any existing stock.

A number of large lodging chains have discontinued the use of small plastic bottles of personal cleansing products provided for the convenience of their guests, and have opted instead to convert to refillable dispensers. Discarded plastic bottles and containers are easily carried by wind and water, and are a very visible and irritating discarded material. Plastics have washed up on remote island beaches and are found in the oceans as part of large floating “trash islands”, eventually breaking down into micro-pieces that are finding their way into the food chain.

The City of Baltimore conducted a winter and summer waste sort in 2019 and found that approximately 18% of residential trash was mixed plastic. And while there are many types and compositions of plastic containers, not all are easily recycled or repurposed. Removing as many of these products as possible from consumer use through source reduction is a practical and effective means to lessen the impact of these materials in our environment. This change also has great potential to raise awareness about source reduction, especially if hotels add educational signage. Visitors who stay in Maryland hotels and other lodging establishments each year will begin to understand that waste reduction is the first step, and that the change will positively impact the environment.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 354.