



Peter Franchot
Comptroller

TESTIMONY OF COMPTROLLER PETER FRANCHOT
Support - House Bill 13 - Solid Waste Management - Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon Into the Atmosphere

Environment and Transportation Committee
January 29, 2020

Chairman Barve, Vice Chairman Stein, members of the Committee, I am pleased to provide testimony in **support** of **House Bill 13 - Solid Waste Management - Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon Into the Atmosphere**. I would like to thank Delegate Hartman and the others sponsors for this invaluable piece of legislation.

House Bill 13 prohibits a person from knowingly and intentionally releasing a balloon into the atmosphere. Often, celebratory “balloon releases” can result in hundreds of balloons dispatched into the atmosphere and eventually the littering of our bays, wetlands, rivers and forests. This bill does not target an individual or child who accidentally lets go of their balloon but instead ends an unnecessary and wasteful practice actively causing damage to Maryland’s environment.

Balloons that aren’t properly disposed of are often mistaken for food by wildlife, causing blockages in the animal’s digestive track leading to starvation and death. The accompanying strings and ribbons can also entangle wildlife leading to similar outcomes.

Queen Anne’s County and the Town of Ocean City have already led the way in passing local laws banning the intentional release of nonbiodegradable balloons. I believe House Bill 13 provides a smart, timely and bipartisan vehicle for the State of Maryland to do the same.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request a **favorable report** for House Bill 13. Thank you for your time and consideration.

###