



DATE: February 13, 2020

BILL NO: HB209

BILL TITLE: Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation Committee

BILL CONTACT: Delegate Lierman

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

To: The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee, and Committee Members

I am the executive director of DoTheMostGood—Montgomery County, a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 1600 members who live in a wide range of communities from Bethesda near the DC line north to Germantown and from Potomac east to Silver Spring. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment. For these reasons, we strongly support HB209 to prohibit the distribution of single use plastic carry out bags in Maryland.

Plastic carry out bags are a major source of litter and environmental pollution. We've all seen plastic bags blowing in the wind, caught in trees, and littering roads, parks and playgrounds. Plastic bags can take up to 1000 years to decompose in the environment. Furthermore, plastic bags are made from crude oil. It is estimated that the U.S. uses approximately 1.6 billion gallons of oil each year to produce the more than 380 billion of plastic bags used in the United States. It is essential that our legislators act now to protect our planet for future generations by prohibiting unnecessary uses of fossil fuels. An important step is the banning of plastic carryout bags.

Enactment of HB209 will go a long way to reducing plastic bag litter and environmental pollution and will keep Maryland among the leaders in protecting our environment. Eight states- California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon and Vermont-- already ban single-use plastic bags. At the municipal level, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle also have plastic bag bans. Montgomery County, Maryland's most populous county, has imposed a fee for plastic bags for several years, but this is not sufficient.

HB209 will provide the kind of incentive that needs to be enacted to encourage consumers to use reusable bags. HB209 is good for the environment and good for the planet.

Therefore, DoTheMostGood recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on HB209.

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