



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

February 11, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 209, Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed House Bill 209, entitled *Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act*. We support the concept of reducing plastic waste and litter and would like to provide additional information regarding the bill.

Beginning July 1, 2021, the bill would prohibit a store from providing a plastic carryout bag to a customer and require a store to charge, collect, and retain at least 10 cents for each durable carryout bag provided to a customer. A unit of county government would be responsible for enforcing the proposed legislation. The Maryland Department of Labor would be required to adopt regulations to implement the proposed legislation.

The proposed legislation would also establish a Single-Use Products Workgroup to study and make recommendations to address plastic and single-use container waste throughout Maryland. The effective date for the workgroup provisions in the proposed legislation is July 1, 2020, and the workgroup must submit a report of its findings by December 1, 2020. It may be difficult for the workgroup to complete its study, formulate recommendations, and write the final report between July 1, 2020, and December 1, 2020. In order to effectively convene the workgroup and study the topics outlined in the proposed legislation, MDE recommends revising the due date for the final report to January 1, 2022.

MDE's 2016 Statewide Waste Characterization Study found that clean film and clean shopping bags make up approximately 0.7 percent of the municipal solid waste being disposed of in Maryland by weight. While plastic carryout bags make up a small portion of the overall waste stream, they can pose litter and water quality problems. Plastic carryout bags are susceptible to littering because they are lightweight they can make their way into storm drains and waterways and pose a risk of ingestion by marine and other wildlife. Maryland has established Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for trash in certain State waters.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor House Bill 209 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Abbott', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Brooke E. Lierman
Ms. Kaley Laleker, Director, Land and Materials Administration