



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Support

HB209

Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

House Environmental and Transportation Committee

2/11/2020,

Good afternoon, Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, Members of the Environmental and Transportation Committee, my name is Rev. Kathy Shahinian and I serve as the Public Policy Liaison for the Episcopal Diocese of MD. The Maryland Diocese represents 108 parishes and over 40,000 parishioners in the state.

We are committed to doing our part to end plastic pollution in the environment. Plastic pollution in our environment—in our ocean—our world is unacceptable. Legislatures around the country have considered a number of methods to reduce the use of plastic bags at grocery stores and other businesses. HB 209 is an effective way to begin to reduce plastics and plastic packaging.

Reducing the use of plastic bags will mitigate the harmful impacts to our oceans, rivers, lakes, and wildlife that reside in them. Additionally it will reduce the many problems associated with landfills being able to break down the toxic material.

The intent of this bill is to discourage the use of plastic bags. Eight states - California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon and Vermont have banned single use plastic bags. The world produces more than 300 million tons of plastic each year, and scientists estimate that up to 91 percent of plastic is never recycled, that in turn threatens the environment and poisons animals.

As stewards of the earth, God mandates us to care for this beautiful planet, our home.

We respectfully request a favorable report.