



MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

February 11, 2020

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SUPPORT HB209: Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

Dear Chairman Barve, Chairman Davis and members of the Committees:

Maryland League of Conservation Voters strongly urges your support of HB209 Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act, and we thank Delegate Lierman for her leadership on this issue. HB209 and its Senate cross-file are priorities of Maryland LCV and of the Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE), a table of 30 organizations working on statewide environmental policy.

Last year, the General Assembly took an important step in becoming the first state in the nation to pass a statewide Styrofoam ban, in order to protect the health of our waterways and in recognition of the climate cost of production and destruction of expanded polystyrene foam. We applaud these committees for their leadership to pass the Styrofoam ban, which has inspired similar action across the country. For many of the same reasons, the environmental community is united in asking for a ban on plastic bags at the point of sale with a minimum fee of 10c per paper bag.

Even in a robust recycling market, plastic bags are virtually unrecyclable, and end up buried in landfills, burned in incinerators, or littering our neighborhoods and clogging our waterways. Additionally, 8% of the world's oil production is used to make plastics, either via the materials or the energy used to manufacture it. This number is only expected to rise. It is vitally important that we take every possible measure to reduce our climate pollution in order to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. Eliminating plastic bags is an important measure to this end. While paper bags have a different environmental impact, simply replacing one kind of pollution with another does not solve the problem, and we know that requiring consumers to pay for their bags at check-out is essential to the policy's success, especially in already disadvantaged communities where the effects of litter and pollution are the greatest.

We recognize the potential effects to low-income communities and look forward to working with the committee and other interested advocates in the workgroup mandated by this bill to find a solution that ensures that already disadvantaged communities do not bear a financial burden as a result of this policy.

Maryland League of Conservation Voters strongly urges a favorable report on HB 209.

Thank you.

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