



**Bill:** HB 69

**Date:** February 17, 2021

**Position:** Support

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### **HB 69 - Environment - Single-Use Plastics - Restrictions Support**

Dear Chairman Davis and members of the Economic Matters Committee:

Trash Free Maryland is a nonprofit organization focused on lasting change to prevent trash pollution. We bring together organizations, businesses, government agencies and decision makers, and individuals committed to reducing trash in Maryland's environment.

Trash Free Maryland enthusiastically supports HB 69, which would prohibit a restaurant from providing certain single-use plastic items unless a customer requests them, with some exceptions. It would also prohibit hotels and other lodging establishments from providing personal cleansing products, such as shampoo and conditioner, in travel size plastic bottles in guest rooms. Guests could still request these items from the establishment.

According to the Trash Free Seas Alliance, the average American uses 1.6 straws a day. In the US alone, that's enough to circle the equator two and a half times. Plastic straws don't get recycled; they end up in landfills and incinerators, or littered in the environment where they do damage to our ecosystem. Many marine animals mistake these and other plastic items for food. Plastic has been found in an estimated 90% of all seabirds and in all sea turtle species. By 2050 it is projected that there will be more plastic in the world's oceans than fish, by weight. When you include the other single-use plastics items covered by this bill the problem is magnified. People often don't need single-use plastic items at restaurants because there are so many reusable alternatives which are far better for the environment and human health, and don't impact businesses negatively, but if people want single-use plastic items they can request them. By making single-use plastic items by request, we can significantly reduce the use of single-use plastics in Maryland and prevent tons of toxic litter from entering our environment.

Regarding lodging establishments, 5 billion single-use toiletry bottles are discarded annually -- many of them only partially used -- which adds to our substantial and growing plastic waste problem. These bottles can be difficult to recycle because they are often only partially used, and therefore too contaminated by their remaining

contents and small size for the recycling process. Tons of plastic trash are added to landfills by toiletry bottles on an annual basis. There are less wasteful and ultimately cheaper alternatives available, such as wall mounted bulk dispensers or larger bottles. With bulk dispensers a hotel with 140 rooms can save an estimated \$2000 and reduce plastic waste by over 250 pounds annually.

**We urge a favorable report on HB 69.** Thank you.

Contact:

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