



**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0314 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act**  
January 28, 2020

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments **IN SUPPORT** of **HB0314 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act**. ShoreRivers represents more than 3500 local members and our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

This legislation will (1) prevent a store from providing a plastic carryout bag to a customer, (2) issue a civil penalty not to exceed \$500 for violating this legislation, (3) prevent a store from being issued a penalty more than once within a 7-day period, (4) allow a county government to offer no more than two waivers to a store that can prove undue hardship, and (5) require the department to adopt regulations to implement this legislation.

The Town of Chestertown prohibited the use of non-recyclable and non-biodegradable single use plastic bags in 2011. Retailers were able to quickly adapt to the changes and there is a noticeable reduction in plastic bags littering our local lands and waters. These single-use plastic bags, often only used for a few minutes to transport groceries and other goods before being disposed of, cause serious harm to our local ecosystems, waterways, and even stormwater infrastructure. Plastic bags are one of the most common items of trash found throughout our watersheds on the Eastern Shore and can entangle and kill wildlife, clog restoration projects and storm drains, and remain in the ecosystem for hundreds or thousands of years before decomposing.

By prohibiting the use of plastic bags and creating a system of enforcement and accountability, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act provides an important first step and a clear pathway to more comprehensive waste reform. **It is simply irresponsible to create 1000 years of negative impact from a piece of trash that was used for just a few minutes.**

Thank you for your leadership by taking an important step to prevent trash from entering Maryland's rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. For these reasons, ShoreRivers urges the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB0314**.

Sincerely,

**Zack Kelleher**

Sassafras Riverkeeper, on behalf of:

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***ShoreRivers***

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