



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

**Testimony in SUPPORT of Environment – Packaging, Containers, and Paper Products –
Producer Responsibility**

Hearing Date: February 9, 2021

Bill Sponsor: Delegates Lierman, Charkoudian, D. Jones, R. Lewis, Love, and Terrasa

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Submitting: Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable with Amendments

[HoCo Climate Action](#) -- a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,450 subscribers, and a member of the Howard County Climate Collaboration -- supports HB 36.

We strongly urge you to support the proposed bill that shifts the responsibility for post consumer waste from taxpayers and municipalities to the companies that produce the packaging. HoCo Climate Action's focus is the climate crisis and the greenhouse gases and toxic pollutants that are generated when the packaging is created, transported, and disposed continues to greatly exacerbate the climate crisis.

We are so alarmed by the increase in plastic and packaging production and waste, we held a [film screening and discussion panel of The Story of Plastic](#) in June of 2020 to highlight the plastic crisis link to the climate crisis. Production and the eventual disposal of all this packaging is becoming unmanageable and unsustainable. The vast majority of plastic waste is not recyclable and ends up in landfills, incinerators, and pollutes our communities and waterways which has harmful environmental and public health impacts. Meanwhile, the producers of all of this waste have little to no incentives to make their packaging more sustainable because the disposal and environmental costs are shouldered by local municipalities and taxpayers and not by the producers.

This bill is needed to incentivize producers to use materials and products that are more readily recyclable or compostable and disincentivize them from using materials and creating products that are hard to recycle. Implementing a cost sharing model, shifts the costs from municipalities to producers and drives producers to reduce waste and meet recyclability standards and environmental design criteria.

Extending responsibility to producers for the packaging products they create (Extended Producer Responsibility - EPR) has proven to be successful. In Europe, where EPR has been established for decades, many countries have post-consumer products and packaging recycling rates above 70% or 80%. HB 36 requires producers of products to submit a product stewardship plan to MDE and requires the plan to develop and meet certain criteria such as performance goals, implementation plan, and public outreach and education.

This bill also defines which producers and products are covered under this requirement. In the U.S., there are many EPR policies targeting many types of products such as electronics, paint, mattresses, carpet, fluorescent lighting and pharmaceuticals. Bottles are included in this bill, but we feel that bottles will have better recycling rates if they are recycled through a bottle deposit program. Therefore we request an amendment to remove bottles as a product covered by this bill.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a critical policy mechanism to help advance a zero waste future and a circular economy. For these reasons, we urge you to support HB 36 with an amendment to remove bottles from this bill and we request you support HB 99 - Beverage Container Deposit Program.

HoCo Climate Action

HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee,

www.HoCoClimateAction.org