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The Maryland House of Delegates Committee on Environment and Transportation

HB0314 Plastic Bag Ban

Position: Support

Microplastics, specifically from plastic bags, are notorious for killing sea turtles, whales, and seabirds. This bill is an excellent step forward in reducing the rapid decline of endangered Royal and Common terns and other iconic seabirds that define our coastal state.

For this reason, Audubon Maryland-DC asks you to vote HB0314 out of committee and onto the floor to keep Maryland beautiful and safe for wildlife. We are one of 22 state programs of the National Audubon Society with approximately 19,000 members in Maryland.

This bill will reduce waste. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, a plastic can persist in our environment and pollute our communities for generations. Each year, the average American uses more than 300 single-use disposable bags.

Un-recyclable, plastic bags end up buried in leaky landfills or burned in incinerators. If they get loose they end up littering our neighborhoods, roads, and waterways. It takes more than 500 years for a plastic bag to degrade. The bags don't break down completely but instead photo-degrade, becoming microplastics that regularly kill sea turtles and seabirds that mistake them for food.

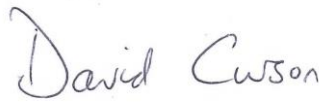
Scientists have found plastic fragments in hundreds of species, including 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all seabird species, and 43% of all marine mammal species. Most victims die from starvation from intestinal blockage.

Still, opposition from the bill comes almost solely from manufacturers of plastic, supermarket chains, and the petrochemical industry. Across the country, plastic bag bans have passed in over 350 cities and other communities. Passing this out of committee just makes sense for a state so reliant on its beaches and bays.

Audubon Maryland-DC respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0314.

Sincerely,

David Curson, PhD

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Curson". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and legible.

Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Maryland-DC