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MAYOR

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SB 223

January 28, 2021

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations
RE: SENATE BILL 223 – PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION ACT
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 223.

Senate Bill 223 would prohibit a store from distributing plastic single-use carry out bags to a customer at the point of sale. Certain exemptions to the prohibition are included. The legislation also preempts the authority of a County or municipality to enact similar prohibitions. Fees for the use of alternate carryout bags may only be required if adopted by a County or municipality on or before February 1, 2021.

Baltimore City, like many other Maryland jurisdictions, struggles with the problem of litter in its streets and waterways. The increase of plastic debris in the world's oceans is a growing crisis. By reducing the use of plastic bags and packaging at the source, SB 223 would benefit the goal of waste reduction as outlined in the City's 2019 Sustainability Plan and the more recent Less Waste Better Baltimore plan.

To help advance our local goals, last year Baltimore City adopted a ban on plastic bags, which requires a 5-cent fee be collected for alternate carryout bags (including compostable plastic bags) and defines a plastic carryout bag more narrowly. SB 223 takes the right steps to expand and suitably apply what is occurring locally in Baltimore City and a few other jurisdictions to a statewide level.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 223.