



Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB 314 - "Plastic Bag Reduction Act"

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 28, 2021

On behalf of the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County, I strongly urge a favorable report on HB 314 to prohibit certain retail establishments from distributing plastic carryout bags to customers at the point of sale, or take other actions to prohibit, restrict, or regulate the use of certain plastic bags.

Plastic bags are produced using petroleum, natural gas, and other chemicals. Plastic production is toxic to the environment and therefore to people exposed to those chemicals, byproducts and process wastes.

The average American family takes home almost 1,500 plastic shopping bags a year which are ***only used for an average of 12 minutes***. Of those, only 1 percent of plastic bags are returned for recycling to the waste management company Waste Management. This translates to the average family only recycling 15 bags a year. ***Most end up in landfills or as litter.***

It takes 500 (or more) years for a plastic bag to degrade in a landfill. Unfortunately, the bags don't break down completely but instead photo-degrade, becoming microplastics that absorb toxins and continue to pollute the environment.

This bill will take a critically important step forward for our state in reducing plastic pollution which affects all of us.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.

Peter Alexander, PhD
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