HB0021 Environment – Recycling – Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic
Presented to the Honorable Kumar P. Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
January 29, 2021 1:30 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the Environment and Transportation Committee to issue **a favorable report on HB0021 Environment – Recycling – Prohibition on the Chemical Conversion of Plastic**, sponsored by Delegate Love.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. Climate change is adversely impacting reproductive and sexual health in various ways, with low-income people and communities of color bearing the brunt of the worsening environmental health outcomes. HB0021 bans infrastructure that converts plastic to fuel or feedstock and ensures these processes do not receive recycling incentives or subsidies. It is essential to stand against this infrastructure because, if not, it locks us into plastic production and fossil fuel use, which exacerbate climate change resulting in detrimental effects on human health.

Climate change is impacting reproductive health in a myriad of ways. Research has demonstrated the reproductive health outcomes associated with environmental pollution including infertility, abnormal menstruation and puberty, endometriosis, recurrent pregnancy loss, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), fetal death, prenatal growth abnormalities, reduced gestational period, low birth weight,[1] pregnancy-induced hypertension and preeclampsia,[2] and genital and breast cancers.[3]Additionally, rising global temperatures are making heat a more serious threat to pregnant persons going forward; exposure to unusually hot temperatures can lead to changes in length of gestation, birth weight, stillbirth rates, and neonatal stress.[4] Furthermore, increased instances of natural disasters result in a disruption of reproductive health services which can lead to

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[1] Rashtian, J., Chavkin, D.E. & Merhi, Z. (2019) Water and soil pollution as determinant of water and food quality/contamination and its impact on female fertility. Reproductive Biology & Endocrinology 17, 5. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12958-018-0448-5

[2] Wang, Aolin et al. "Environmental influences on reproductive health: the importance of chemical exposures." *Fertility and sterility* vol. 106,4 (2016): 905-29. doi:10.1016/j.fertnstert.2016.07.1076

[3] Bhatt, R.V. (2000). Environmental Influence on Reproductive Health. International Journal for Gynecology and Obstetrics, 70: 69-75. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0020-7292(00)00221-6

[4] Bekkar B, Pacheco S, Basu R, & DeNicola N. (2020). Association of Air Pollution and Heat Exposure with Preterm Birth, Low Birth Weight, and Stillbirth in the US: A Systematic Review. JAMA Network Open; 3(6):e208243. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.8243

unplanned pregnancies; conversely, natural disasters can displace families and leave them financially unstable resulting in reduced fertility.[5] In both cases, individuals lose their reproductive freedom to choose when to become pregnant.

The processes involved in the chemical conversion of plastic to fuel contributes to climate change and increases our reliance on fossil fuels in the long-run. It is imperative that we prohibit these practices in order to mitigate further environmental damage. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB0021.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

[5] Tobin-Gurley, J, Peek, L, & Loomis, J. (2011). Displaced Single Mothers in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters 28, no. 2: 170-206.