



Bill: SB 223

Date: January 28, 2021

Position: Support

SB 223 - Plastic Bag Reduction Act Support

Dear Chairman Kelley and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Trash Free Maryland enthusiastically supports SB 223, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act. This much needed legislation will help reduce plastic litter across Maryland by banning single-use plastic bags at the point of sale, with some exceptions.

The problem: Marylanders are using close to two billion plastic bags per year, and they have become prevalent in Maryland's waterways, along its roads, in its trees, and in its neighborhoods. Very few plastic bags get recycled -- less than 9% of plastics, and only 5% of plastic bags, are recycled in the United States according to the EPA. Instead, they end up in landfills, incinerators, or are discarded and blown into the environment. In addition to being unsightly, plastic bags harm aquatic wildlife and sea birds which ingest them either as whole bags or in toxic pieces as they degrade. Microplastics have been found in many places such as tap and bottled water, table salt, and even beer. By 2050 it is estimated that there will be more plastic in the world's oceans than there are fish by weight.

The solution: One of the most common forms of plastic pollution in Maryland is single-use plastic bags. We can stop this by using readily available alternatives such as reusable bags. The best way to do this is to ban single use plastic bags at the point of sale. Over 500 jurisdictions across the United States have implemented plastic bag reduction laws and have seen their use drop dramatically.

We urge a favorable report on SB 223. Thank you.

Contact:

Shane Robinson, Executive Director, Trash Free Maryland

shane@trashfreemaryland.org

202-684-0984