

To: Members, House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Chesapeake Beach Mayor Patrick J Mahoney

Subject: Testimony Supporting House Bill (HB) 314: The Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Committee Members,

As Mayor of Chesapeake Beach, a coastal town in Maryland on the Chesapeake Bay, I feel it imperative to ask you to support HB 314. I am going to address 3 aspects: the harm of plastic bags, their adverse effect on tourism and plastic free initiatives our town is considering moving forward.

Harmful Plastic Bags

Plastics are harmful to human health. PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyl) together with PAHs (Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) are harmful hormone disrupters and also commonly used in single-use plastic bags

In our town, as in most coastal towns, we experience high winds regularly. These lightweight pieces of plastic easily catch the air if not disposed of properly and wind up in our waterways. They are regularly found on the beach and marshlands during our cleanups. Not only is this undesirable for humans the plastics break down and enter the food chain causing wildlife to fall ill or even die.

Adverse Effects on Tourism

For the State of Maryland, if marine debris is allowed to double, the impacts projected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are:

- Decrease of 3.5 million visitor days
- Decrease of \$141 million in recreational value
- Decrease of \$254 million in tourism spending
- Decrease of 3,400 jobs

We live in a critical area of the largest estuary in the world, it is our responsibility to ensure clean waterways for recreation, tourism, and commerce (charter boats, watermen, waterfront restaurants/hotels). Our town and livelihoods rely on clean and natural surroundings.

Plastic Free Initiatives

Looking ahead to passage and implementation of HB 314, our Town is planning some "Go plastic free now" initiatives (green friendly shopping bags giveaways, educational forums) so our citizenry can smoothly transition to a plastic free way of life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Patrick J Mahoney

Mayor, Chesapeake Beach, MD

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