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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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**The House Environment and Transportation Committee
SB 716 Solid Waste Management – Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon Into the
Atmosphere
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza**

Thank you Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee for the opportunity to respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 716 Solid Waste Management – Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon Into the Atmosphere.

This bill simply prohibits, with specified exceptions, a person from knowingly and intentionally releasing, or causing to be released, a balloon into the atmosphere or organizing or participating in a mass balloon release. The bill establishes six hours of community service and watching an educational video on those who intentionally release a balloon and a civil penalty of up to \$100 per violation on those organizing or participating in a mass balloon release.

Once again this year, this legislation has broad bipartisan support from multiple local and state environmental and other organizations including the Maryland Coastal Bays headquartered in my District, the Sierra Club, the Assateague Coastal Trust, Ocean City Surf Club, the National Aquarium, the Maryland Zoo, Trash Free Maryland, the Maryland Farm Bureau, the Humane Society, and the Animal Welfare Institute.

The goal of this legislation is to educate individuals on the harmful effects that balloons have on our environment including killing wildlife, causing power outages, and polluting our trees and waterways, and to prohibit the knowingly and intentional release of balloons into the atmosphere. I urge my colleagues and committee members to pass this commonsense and bipartisan legislation to protect our birds, sea life, and of course our beloved Assateague ponies.

I respectfully ask members on the House Environment and Transportation Committee for a favorable report of Senate Bill 716.

Thank you for your kind consideration.