



PATUXENT RIVER COMMISSION

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Councilman Michael Leszcz, *Chairman*

Christopher Perry, *Vice Chairman*

We, the Patuxent River Commission, envision a Patuxent River ecosystem as vital and productive in 2050 as it was in the 1950s. We therefore commit to be stewards and advocates for the Patuxent River and to lead and inspire actions to protect, enhance, and restore living resources and the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values of the Patuxent River and its watershed.

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee, Maryland House of Delegates
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Plastic Bag Reduction Act – HB314

Dear Delegate Barve:

In 2001, the Maryland legislature, seven counties and the City of Laurel adopted the Patuxent River Policy Plan, which includes goals to restore the water quality and living resources of Maryland's largest and longest river. In 2014, the seven counties and the City of Laurel recommitted to restoring the river by adopting the 2015 update to the Patuxent River Policy Plan. Subsequently, in 2016, the Maryland General Assembly passed Joint Resolution 1 to approve the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan update as an amendment to the Patuxent River Policy Plan.

The Maryland legislature established the Patuxent River Commission to "review the operation of units of State and local government that have responsibility for implementation of the Plan." **As a result of a review of the environmental bills introduced to date in the 2021 legislative session, the Commission is providing a letter of support for HB314 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act (state agencies on the Commission abstained from voting on the motion).**

This bill will help reduce the impact of plastic bags that pollute our rivers and streams and harm wildlife; it will support restoration efforts for the Patuxent River. We urge the committee's support of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Leszcz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Michael R. Leszcz, Councilman
City of Laurel
Chair, Patuxent River Commission

cc: Maryland State Senator Jim Rosapepe; Maryland State Delegates Benjamin Barnes, Mary Lehman, Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Diana Fennell