



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

Senate Bill 223

Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Date: January 28, 2021
To: Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support
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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 223 that prohibits retail establishments from distributing plastic carryout bags to a customer at the point of sale on or after July 1, 2022.

Reducing plastic bag pollution helps protect the Chesapeake Bay and marine life

Nearly two million single-use plastics bags are distributed worldwide every minute. Many of the bags become litter that degrades and pollutes natural environments. The Chesapeake Bay ends up being a landing point for plastics pollution. Plastic pollution harms shorelines, water habitats and threatens aquatic life.¹ As plastic pollution breaks down, microplastics create an imbalance in the food chain in the Chesapeake Bay.

Promoting waste reduction and changing behavior around single-use plastics supports the Bay

This bill will reduce plastic pollution at the source of the retailer. The prohibition on the distribution of plastic bags will encourage customers to adopt a new habit of using reusable bags. Even if a delay in new policies is needed to protect health and safety during the global pandemic, CBF is hopeful for an eventual implementation of a plastic bag prohibition. When implemented, the prohibition on single-use plastic bags will help lessen the plastic debris from entering local waterways in the Chesapeake Bay.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 223.

¹ Cole, M. (2015). *The Impact of Polystyrene Microplastics on Feeding, Function and Fecundity in the Marine Copepod Calanus helgolandicus*. Environ. Sci. Technol. 49, 2, 1130-1137. <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/es504525u>.

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