

Support Plastic Bag Ban SB223.pdf

Uploaded by: Aiosa, Jenn

Position: FAV



SB 223 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act – SUPPORT

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Finance Committee:

Blue Water Baltimore is the watershed-based nonprofit focused on improving water quality and community resilience within Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and home to the Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper. We respectfully request your support of SB 223 – the Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

Baltimore City is one of the few jurisdictions in the United States with a waterway listed as “impaired” under the Federal Clean Water Act for trash. This means that trash is so prevalent in the streams that empty into the Baltimore Harbor that the Harbor itself is not meeting water quality standards and that significant efforts are necessary to reverse this scenario. Banning single-use, disposable convenience items is one tactic that works well to reduce such items from the waste stream.

Baltimore City led efforts to ban the use of Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) Foam in 2018, that helped persuade State lawmakers to do the same. In 2019, Baltimore City joined other Maryland jurisdictions to ban single-use plastic bags from most restaurants and retail outlets. While implementation of Baltimore’s bag ban has been temporarily delayed due to COVID-19, when implemented, it will not be able to stem the tide of single use plastics – bags and other trash – from entering our waterways from other jurisdictions. It is time for the State to create a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags.

SB 223 would do just this. This bill would ban the use and distribution of plastic bags (less than 4 mils thick) as well as “compostable” plastic bags. This ban will apply to ALL retailers, providing for a few exemptions for uses such as deli meat, produce, newspapers, dry cleaning and fresh flowers. Reliance on jurisdiction-specific plastic bag bans (including Baltimore City’s) has created a patchwork of policies statewide. SB 223 will create continuity among jurisdictions and reduce plastic pollution statewide, by simply banning the use and distribution of plastic bags.

Unlike previous legislative efforts, SB 223 does not dictate alternatives or place a fee on alternatives, which inadvertently disproportionately impacts lower-income residents. Alternatives to single-use plastic bags exist, including a variety of reusable bags, and many retailers throughout Maryland, including grocery chains like Aldi and Lidl, do not offer customers plastic bags currently. Banning the distribution of plastic bags that often end up in tree limbs and along highways and waterways will not cause undue hardship for anyone. But this simple action will result in less plastic bags polluting our environment and our communities.

For these reasons, Blue Water Baltimore, on behalf of our thousands of members and supporters, respectfully requests a FAVORABLE report on SB 223. Thank you.

Jennifer Aiosa
Executive Director
Blue Water Baltimore
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NNWB testimony SB 223 Plastic Bag Reduction Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Ambler, Anne

Position: FAV



SB0223 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Committee: Finance

Hearing date: January 28, 2021

Lead Sponsor: Senator Augustine

Position: Favorable

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and members of the Finance Committee,

I submit this testimony in support of SB0223 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act-- on behalf of the Neighbors of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit all-volunteer watershed organization with over 200 members and supporters in Montgomery and Prince Georges counties. We are committed to restoring the health of the 19-mile long Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River so that this urban treasure can be safely enjoyed by wildlife, our families, and generations to come.

Passage of this bill will help address the numerous problems traceable to plastic pollution. The negative impacts of plastic waste on the environment and on human health have been thoroughly established. The EPA recognizes that “[p]lastics pose both physical (e.g., entanglement, gastrointestinal blockage, reef destruction) and chemical threats (e.g., bioaccumulation of the chemical ingredients of plastic or toxic chemicals absorbed by plastics) to wildlife and the marine ecosystem” (<https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters/toxicological-threats-plastic>). In the aquatic environments and watersheds that our organization aims to protect, our volunteers always find discarded plastic, whole bags or fragments, and students have identified microplastics in the water using a microscope.

Plastics also play a role in the release of toxic chemicals into waterways. A recent survey of decades of scientific findings found strong evidence that plastics release an endocrine-disrupting chemical into the environment as they break down (<https://biodesign.asu.edu/news/perils-plastics-risks-human-health-and-environment>). This has a direct impact on human hormone functions. In addition to the chemicals plastics release into our environment, they also make it easier for dangerous chemicals from a variety of sources to reach hazardous concentrations. A study in the *Marine Pollution Bulletin* found that microplastics in aquatic environments attract high levels of “persistent organic pollutants” that occur naturally in seawater. By concentrating

these pollutants, microplastics contribute to higher pollutant levels within organisms that consume microplastics. Those high concentrations work their way up the food chain, damaging entire ecosystems and the humans that rely on them (<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.460.1971&rep=rep1&type=pdf>). It is important to recognize that these harmful effects of plastic not only degrade the water our organization seeks to protect, but that this degradation affects the people who depend on and use those water sources every day. This problem is urgent and demands bold and assertive action.

Our organization has seen first-hand the impact that single-use plastics, including plastic bags, have on our state's watersheds, streams, and rivers. We are also keenly aware of Maryland's obligation as an integral part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We have been encouraged by the reduction in plastic bags we've found following Montgomery County's plastic bag tax, implemented in 2012. However, it is also the case that the bag tax does not go far enough. Some retailers have been lax in enforcement, and a five-cent tax is limited in its ability to change consumer behavior in the long-term if stores continue to provide easy access to single-use plastic bags. As the experience of other towns and states across the country has shown, a ban on these bags would go a long way toward large-scale reduction of the amount of plastic entering our environment.

The state of Maryland is fortunate to have a wealth of watersheds, creeks, streams, lakes, and coastal areas. But these environmental riches must not be taken for granted. Instead, we must recognize our stewardship responsibility, preserve what we have, and rehabilitate what has already been harmed.

The Plastic Bag Reduction Act represents one action we can take to achieve those goals. **The Neighbors of the Northwest Branch strongly urges the committee to issue a favorable report on SB0223.** Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Anne Ambler, President
Neighbors of the Northwest Branch
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SB0223-Testimony-28-Jan-2021.pdf

Uploaded by: Auerbach, Ruth

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB0223 The Plastic Bag Reduction Act Support

POSITION: Support

BY: Ruth Auerbach, District 13 Resident, Columbia, MD

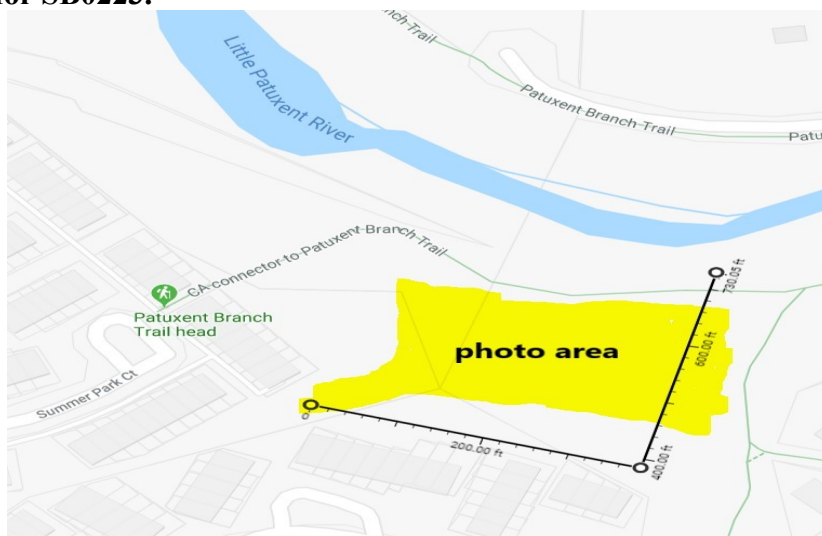
Date: January 28, 2021

I grew up in Montgomery County, MD, and frequently visit there. Montgomery County has been collecting a bag fee for seven years. The first time I encountered it at a grocery store, I admit I was annoyed. However, I quickly became accustomed to it, and I found that bringing reusable bags to the store is easy. I've acquired all my reusable bags for free through business promotions and my workplace.

Plastic waste is a serious environmental problem that will not go away easily. By banning plastic bags and imposing a fee on other disposable bags, I anticipate that many Maryland residents will respond like I did and switch to reusable bags. We must start doing the easy things now. From the UN Report on Single-use Plastics, "We are already unable to cope with the amount of plastic waste we generate, unless we rethink the way we manufacture, use and manage plastics. Ultimately, tackling one of the biggest environmental scourges of our time will require governments to regulate, businesses to innovate and individuals to act."

To demonstrate the disposable bag problem in Maryland, on March 2, 2019, I took photos of the disposable bags on the Columbia Association public space and townhome association property behind the townhouses 9449 – 9467 Clocktower Lane, Columbia, MD. I found over 30 bags in this relatively small plot. These bags are less than 200 yards from the Little Patuxent River, in an area which drains into it. Below I include an approximate map of the area and a few of the photos I took there.

I urge your support for SB0223.





Again, I urge your support on SB0223.

SB0223 - Balt Sustain Comm.pdf

Uploaded by: Avins, Miriam

Position: FAV

BALTIMORE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

People ♦ Planet ♦ Prosperity

January 28, 2021

Senator and Committee Chair Delores G. Kelley
Members of the Senate Finance Committee

Re: SENATE BILL 0223 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

We are writing on behalf of the Baltimore City Commission on Sustainability in **support** of Senate Bill 0223 – the Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

The Baltimore Commission on Sustainability has 21 members, 20 of whom are Mayoral appointees, and oversees the creation and implementation of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan. The 2019 Baltimore Sustainability Plan addresses a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals for the City, and it does so through an equity lens.

The Baltimore Commission on Sustainability has a strong interest in the success of SB0223 because it would support the implementation of strategies in the Sustainability Plan, Waste and Recycling, Section 3, Action 1: Enact legislation to impose a fee for plastic bags, and support state legislation instituting beverage container deposits. Baltimore City, seeking to improve local water ways and reduce waste, has moved forward with its own plastic bag fee of \$0.05 which is scheduled to become effective July 9, 2021. However, a broader application of strategies to reduce unnecessary plastic consumption and mitigate waste is needed. Consumers and businesses act regionally and Maryland waterways flow through multiple jurisdictions and lead to the Chesapeake Bay which continues to struggle with water quality.

SB0223 is important to move Maryland forward to define a uniform statewide strategy to reduce waste and improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. By doing so, it will also provide businesses and consumers a uniform approach and consistent policies which will improve waste reduction.

We urge you to support Senate Bill 0223.

Sincerely,

Miriam Avins
Mia Blom
Co-chairs, Commission on Sustainability

Cc: Senator Augustine

SB0223-FAV-DTMG-1-28-21.pdf

Uploaded by: Bartlett, Olivia

Position: FAV



BILL NO: SB0223 - Plastic Bag Reduction Act

HEARING DATE: January 28, 2021

COMMITTEE: Finance

BILL CONTACT: Senator Malcom Augustine

POSITION: FAVORABLE

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all the members of our communities healthy and safe in a clean environment. DTMG strongly supports SB0223 because it will help remove a major source of plastic pollution from our environment.

Plastic carry out bags are a major source of litter and environmental pollution. We've all seen plastic bags blowing in the wind, caught in trees, and littering roads, parks and playgrounds. Plastic bags can take up to 1000 years to decompose in the environment. Incineration of plastic bag waste releases toxins into the air we all breathe.

Furthermore, plastic bags are made from crude oil. It is estimated that the U.S. uses approximately 1.6 billion gallons of oil each year to produce the more than 380 billion plastic bags used per year in the United States. It is essential that we act now to protect our planet for future generations by prohibiting unnecessary uses of fossil fuels. Banning plastic carryout bags is an important step in that direction.

Enactment of SB0223 will go a long way to reducing plastic bag litter and environmental pollution and will keep Maryland among the leaders in protecting our environment. Reducing plastic bag use can mitigate harmful impacts of plastic pollution on oceans, rivers, lakes, forests and the wildlife that inhabit them. It can also relieve pressure on landfills and waste management.

Eight states-- California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon and Vermont--already ban single-use plastic bags. At the municipal level, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle also have plastic bag bans. Montgomery County, Maryland's most populous county, has imposed a fee for plastic bags for several years, but this is not sufficient.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, fossil fuel and plastic industry groups have spread false information that reusable bags could spread the coronavirus and encouraged more use of plastic carry out bags. However, coronavirus is spread through inhalation of aerosolized respiratory droplets, not through touching of surfaces. In addition, in a statement released in June 2020, more than 125 virologists, epidemiologists, and health experts from 18 different countries said it's clear that reusable bags are safe to use during the pandemic; they just need to be washed.

(https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Health-Expert-Statement_125-experts.pdf) Research studies showed that infectious COVID-19 virus actually lasts longer on

plastic than on paper or fabric surfaces. Single-use plastic is therefore not inherently safer than reusables and causes additional public health concerns once it is discarded.

SB0223 will provide the kind of incentive that's needed to encourage consumers to use reusable bags. SB0223 is good for the environment, good for the planet, and good for our health.

Therefore, DoTheMostGood recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0223.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
Co-lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
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240-751-5599

SB0223 testimony plastic bags 2021.pdf

Uploaded by: Boyd, Linda

Position: FAV



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT
SB 223
Plastic Bag Reduction Act
Finance Committee

Good afternoon Chair Kelley, Vice-Feldman, members of the Finance Committee, my name is Linda Boyd and today, I represent the Maryland Episcopal Diocese that represents 108 parishes and over 45,000 parishioners stretching from Western Maryland to Calvert County. We support SB 223.

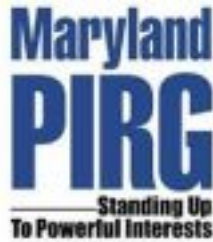
This bill bans single-use plastic bags for distribution at point-of-sale for all retail in the state, with some limited exemptions. Litter has a disproportionate impact on communities that lack adequate public services and have more blight. Studies demonstrate that it contributes to impaired mental health and quality of life. Plastic bags pollute our land and water. Because they are so lightweight, plastic bags can travel long distances by air and water. Plastic bags are made from non-renewable resources. The extraction and production of petroleum and natural gas creates greenhouse gases, which contribute to global warming. Plastic bags never break down and are harmful to wildlife and marine life, and human health. Plastic bags are also costly to pay for and to clean up. They are also difficult to recycle.

We respectfully request a favorable report.

SB223_FAV_EnvMD.pdf

Uploaded by: Breimann, Kate

Position: FAV



SB 223 - Plastic Bag Reduction Act - Finance

January 28th, 2021

Position: Favorable

Environment Maryland is a citizen-based environmental advocacy organization. We work to protect clean air, clean water, and open space. We have thousands of members across the state and are based in Baltimore.

Maryland PIRG's mission is to deliver persistent, result-oriented public interest activism that protects consumers, encourages a fair, sustainable economy, and fosters responsive, democratic government. We are a Baltimore based, statewide, non-partisan, non-profit, citizen-funded public interest advocacy organization with members across the state and a student-funded, student-directed chapter at the University of Maryland College Park.

Chairwoman Kelley & Members of the Committee:

Two summers ago, Environment Maryland staff knocked on 15,000 doors across the state to talk to Marylanders about plastic pollution and its impact on wildlife. Staff collected more than 5,000 petitions calling on Governor Hogan and the Maryland General Assembly to take action on plastic pollution.

We want to thank the General Assembly for its leadership in reducing plastic pollution through a ban on foam food packaging, and we hope this can be the year we bring the bag ban over the finish line.

Here are the top 10 reasons that we support this ban. In no particular order:

#1-Reduce Waste: According to the Center for Biological Diversity, a plastic bag is used for an average of 12 minutes, but can persist in our environment, and pollute our communities, for generations. Nothing we use for a few minutes should be allowed to pollute our communities and the Bay for hundreds of years—especially when we don't really need it.

#2-Reduce Waste: Each year, the average American uses more than 300 single-use disposable bags, and only about 1% of these bags are returned for recycling, with even fewer actually going through the process. Additionally, plastic bags can only go through

the recycling process once or twice - recycling delays a plastic bag's inevitable disposal in a landfill, our waterways, or an incinerator but it certainly doesn't prevent it.

#3-Reduce Waste: We do not need single use plastic bags. They were only introduced in this country in the 1970's. We had a civilized, modern society before these bags became part of everyday commercial life, and we need to move away from them.

#4-Reduce pollution: Plastic bag disposal is a lose/lose/lose. Virtually un-recyclable, when we dispose of them they end up buried in leaky landfills or burned in incinerators. If they get loose they end up littering our neighborhoods, roads, and waterways. Plastic bags are lightweight and can be caught by the wind and carried into our waterways where it eventually leads to the ocean. Plastic bag waste harms health, quality of life, and the environment.

#5-Reduce pollution: According to many different sources, it takes more than 500 years for a plastic bag to degrade. The bags don't break down completely but instead photo-degrade, becoming microplastics that absorb toxins and continue to pollute the environment.

#6-Reduce pollution: For a bird or fish or turtle, it's easy to mistake a small piece of plastic for food—especially when there are millions of pieces of plastic floating in our waterways. Scientists have found plastic fragments in literally hundreds of species, including 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all seabird species, and 43% of all marine mammal species. Ingesting these fragments is often fatal. Animals starve when they ingest too much plastic that they can't digest.

#7-Protect our climate : Plastic bags are made of fossil fuels. The more plastic bags are manufactured, the more we are using fossil fuels. According to National Geographic about 8 percent of the world's oil production is used to make plastic and power the manufacturing of it. That figure is projected to rise to 20 percent by 2050. Every part of a single-use plastic's lifespan emits greenhouse gases.¹ From production to shipping to disposal, single-use plastics make it increasingly less likely that we will stay beneath the 1.5 degree celsius threshold. If we fail to do that, we will be unable to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change.

#8-Promote the public interest: In almost every community which has considered or adopted plastic bans, you find the opponents representing huge industries. Manufacturers of plastic, supermarket chains, the petrochemical industry all have pushed hard against citizen initiatives to promote bans. Yet time and again, the public

¹ ¹ Fast facts about plastic pollution. Laura Parker. National Geographic, Dec 20, 2018.
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2018/05/plastics-facts-infographics-ocean-pollution/>

supports and win bans.

#9-Good public policy: Across the country, plastic bag bans have passed in over 350 cities and other communities. Some companies are also getting with the program. Kroger, the nation's largest grocer which includes Harris Teeter and others, has committed to phasing out plastic bags, and other stores like My Organic Market (MOM's) has already done away with them.

#10-Save money: It stands to reason that cleaning up plastic bag waste and cleaning it out of storm drains, among other places, costs money. One study citing data from the California Integrated Waste Management Board, noted that San Jose alone spends "at least \$3 million annually to clean plastic bags from creeks and clogged storm drains." Let's kick our plastic problem so we can save money, and ultimately send Mr. Trash Wheel into early retirement.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB 223.

2021-1-28 Bag Ban Testimony, Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Cooney, Bente

Position: FAV



Plastic Free QAC

1305 Oyster Cove Drive
Grasonville, MD 21638
703-307-8093

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 223 Plastic Bag Reduction Act January 28, 2021 Senate Finance Committee

Hon. Dolores G. Kelley, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and Committee Members:

My name is Bente Cooney, founder of Plastic Free QAC, a nonprofit organization founded in 2018 around the issue of litter on the streets and waterways of our beautiful Queen Anne's County and a realization that our world is drowning in single-use plastic. Our mission is to engage, inform and inspire Queen Anne's County residents and businesses to make more environmentally responsible choices.

With a strong sense that something has to be done and that everyone has a responsibility to do their part to preserve the health and wellbeing of our shared environment, we have gathered some powerful data. This data supports our goal of getting rid of single-use plastic shopping bags.

First, in 2019, as a result of our road clean ups, our volunteers picked up close to 1,000 plastic bags, 637 of those alone by Claude Lowery's farm across from Safeway in Chester! "We try to make our farm look neat and attractive," Mr. Lowery said recently, "but all those bags make it difficult." He supports the effort to get rid of disposable plastic bags, as do more than 90 other retailers in Queen Anne's County. These retailers include not only farmers, but marinas, hotels, schools, shops, and restaurants.

Second, we have audited the four grocery stores in QAC and counted every shopper leaving each of the stores for one hour on two occasions. Out of 1,271 shoppers, only 8% used reusable shopping bags. Virtually all of the single-use, disposable bags were plastic. For comparison, we surveyed the Aldi grocery store in Easton, where no plastic bags are available. **People brought their own reusable bags (61.5%) or carried their groceries loose in their carts without any bags (32.7%).*** Only 5.8% used disposable bags. **This data shows that behavior change is possible.**

Only 5% of plastic bags are recycled. Legislators across the country are beginning to recognize the issue of single-use plastic. **Already, eight states and 500 localities in the US have enacted bag ban laws.** Delaware just implemented their ban here in January. If Delaware can do it, so can Maryland! While retailers have had a rough time during COVID, the grocery and liquor stores are doing just fine. It is important to remember that SB 223 would not go into effect until July 1, 2022 when COVID should no longer be an issue and the economy, hopefully, will be on an upswing again. **Another important point is that retailers are free to charge whatever amount they want for paper bags for the people who forgot to bring their reusable bag.**

Just as a point of reference, Charleston, SC, which eliminated plastic bags last year, reported that volunteers found an average of 178 single-use plastic bags during a litter clean-up. After the ordinance went into effect, that number went down to 23, **a 77% reduction!**

We urge you to report SB 223 favorably out of Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

Sincerely,

Bente Cooney

Founder

Queen Anne's County 2020 Shopper Survey

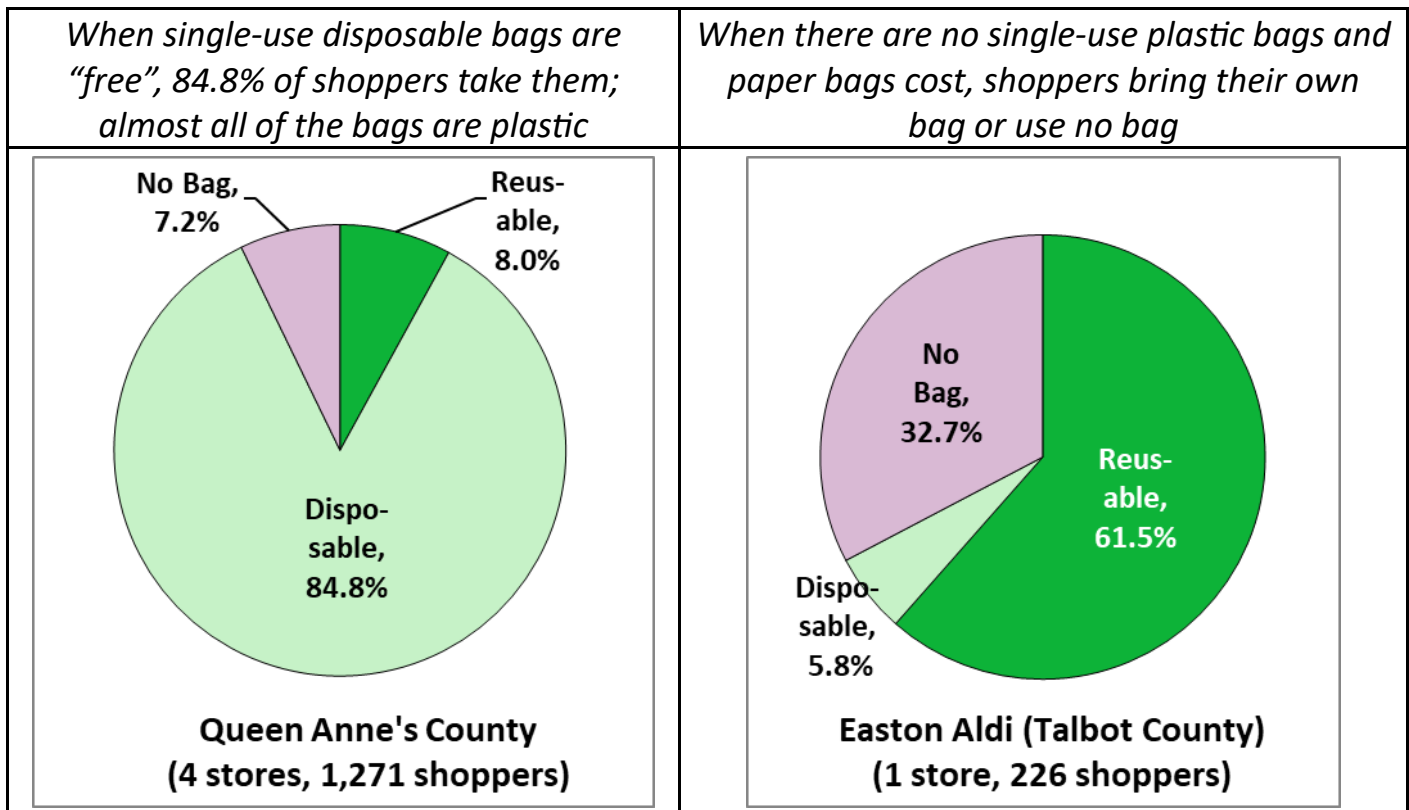
Plastic-Free QAC & Maryland Sierra Club
January 11-19, 2020

5 grocery stores, **1,497** shoppers, **12** volunteers

Stores	# stores	# shoppers	Reusable	Disposable	No Bag
Acme, Food Lion, Safeway*	4	1,271	8.0%	84.8%	7.2%
Aldi **	1	226	61.5%	5.8%	32.7%

These stores provide free carryout bags to shoppers. **Nearest Aldi store, in Easton (Talbot County). Aldi does not provide any thin plastic bags, charges 7 cents for a paper bag, and more for various reusable bags.

Virtually all (99.5%) of the shoppers with single-use, disposable bags at the four QAC grocery stores had **plastic** bags.



"FREE" CARRYOUT BAGS

BAGS AT COST, NO THIN PLASTIC

SB223_IndivisibleHoCoMD_FAV_RichardDeutschmann.pdf

Uploaded by: Deutschmann, Richard

Position: FAV



HB314/SB223 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Testimony before Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2021

Position: Favorable

Madame Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB223**, to eliminate the use of disposable, single-use plastic bags in our communities. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

Our planetary home is in crisis. A crisis that is literally getting us buried in throwaway plastic. According to the United Nations, more than 5 trillion single-use plastic bags are used every year, most of which end up in our oceans, landfills, or turned into toxic air pollution via incineration. Recycling of single-use plastic is technologically limited and impractical, resulting in less than 10% rate of recycling. The plastic that does end up in our oceans persists for 100's of years, and kills an incalculable amount of marine animals each year. Despite all of this, ***the fossil fuel industry has responded with misinformation and aggressive growth goals, aiming to actually increase the amount of throwaway plastic that consumers use each year.***

SB223 moves our state in a new direction – eliminating most routine uses of single-use plastic bags. It specifies a long list of exempted uses, such as the bagging of fresh seafood or pharmaceutical uses. It encourages the use of reusable bags of all sorts. This is really not a heavy lift for anyone, despite the doomsday scenarios that the plastics industry will predictably roll out. My wife and I recently visited Puerto Rico. This Caribbean commonwealth/island territory has had a plastic bag ban in place for several years. From what we could see, the people had responded beautifully, bringing their own reusable bags for both groceries and the bagging of produce in the store. We talked to several people, who were all very happy that throwaway plastic had been reduced in the region. It is critical for the future health of our planet, that we move forward with this and other similar efforts to reduce single-use plastics.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Richard Deutschmann
Columbia, MD

SB223-Plastic Bag- HoCoCA.pdf

Uploaded by: Feighner, Liz

Position: FAV



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB223/HB314 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act
Hearing Date: January 28, 2021
Bill Sponsor: Senator Augustine
Committee: Finance
Submitting: Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) -- a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,450 subscribers, and a member of the Howard County Climate Collaboration -- supports SB223/HB314 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

According to an International Energy Agency report released in Oct 2018, *greenhouse gas emissions from plastics* are predicted to sharply rise at a critical time in which we must be reducing emissions.

The plastic pollution crisis is making headline news. We cannot ignore it any longer. 160,000 plastic bags are used globally every second! If plastic production isn't curbed, plastic pollution will outweigh fish pound for pound by 2050. The average American family takes home almost 1,500 plastic shopping bags a year. According to Waste Management, only one percent of plastic bags are returned for recycling. That means that the average family only recycles 15 bags a year; the rest ends up in landfills as waste or worse as litter in the land and waterways of Maryland.

We must address this issue with urgency. A fee on plastic bags is the most effective way to create behavior change and thereby address this critical issue.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this essential legislation.

HoCo Climate Action

HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee, Laurel MD

www.HoCoClimateAction.org

SB223- National Aquarium- FAV-Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Fredriksson, Ryan

Position: FAV



Date: January 28, 2021

Bill: SB 223- Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Position: Support

Contact:

Ryan Fredriksson

Director, Government Affairs

410-385-8276

rfredriksson@aqua.org

Dear Chairman Kelley and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests your support for **Senate Bill 223 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act**, which will limit the harmful impact plastic bags have on neighborhoods and wildlife across Maryland. The National Aquarium believes that plastic pollution is an issue we can stop in our lifetime. This bill is an important step in making that a reality.

An estimated 15 million metric tons of plastic enters the ocean each year; that is equivalent to at least two dump trucks full of plastic entering the ocean every minute.¹ Once in the environment, plastic debris breaks down into smaller pieces, but they never completely disappear. This plastic debris, including plastic bags, is a hazard for wildlife and habitats, as animals may confuse plastic pieces for food. Over half of all marine mammal species have been impacted by plastic pollution and it is estimated more than 90% of seabirds will ingest plastic by 2050.

If current practices continue, plastic input into the ocean is expected to double by 2025. A recent report by Oceana compiled data from 51 organizations, including the National Aquarium, and found nearly 1,800 cases of documented plastic consumption or entanglement in sea turtles and marine mammals, mostly from 2009 to 2018.² Of these cases, 90% of them involved animals swallowing plastic. Ingested plastic can obstruct an animal's digestion or lacerate intestines, interfering with their ability to survive.

On average, the lifespan of a plastic bag is 12 minutes. The flimsiness that makes plastic bags cheap and plentiful also makes them virtually unrecyclable. When that bag is discarded, it will almost certainly not be recycled. It will go into a landfill, be incinerated or end up in the environment. Plastic bags are easily blown by the wind and end up in trees, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay, and eventually our one, interconnected ocean.

There is ample evidence from around the world that eliminating plastic bags from checkout aisles is an effective way to dramatically reduce the harmful impacts of bags on our environment. If this bill passes, Maryland will join a growing number of states and communities across the country to recognize this is a serious problem with an easily recognizable solution.

As part of the National Aquarium's mission *to inspire conservation of the world's aquatic treasures*, we take seriously our responsibility to educate our visitors and the surrounding community about the negative impact plastic pollution has on the health of people, wildlife and ecosystems. SB 233 is a critical step in the right direction because it will eliminate one of the most prevalent and harmful forms of plastic pollution. **We urge the Committee to vote in favor of Senate Bill 233.**

¹ Forrest A, Giacobazzi L, Dunlop S, et al. (2019). Eliminating Plastic Pollution: How a Voluntary Contribution From Industry Will Drive the Circular Plastics Economy. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 6:627.

² Warner K, Linske E, Mustain P, et al. (November 2020). Choked, Strangled, Drowned: The Plastics Crisis Unfolding In Our Oceans. Zenodo. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4281302>

SB 233 Plastic Bag Reduction Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Hersey, Patricia

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to request a favorable report on SB 223, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

Our current lifestyle of consumerism, overconsumption and convenience is not sustainable on our finite planet.

Every minute of every day a garbage truck full of plastic enters our waterways. It is an environmental and health crisis unfolding before our eyes.

SB 223 will not only address this crisis by reducing plastic, but it will also bring increased awareness to the community so we can move forward and turn the tide on plastic pollution.

Plastic bags in particular have a plethora of negative impacts:

- are not biodegradable
- trillions of bags are produced yearly worldwide, with only 1% being recycled
- take 1,000 years or more to break up into ever smaller particles
- thousands of marine animals die each year after swallowing or choking on plastic bags
- producing plastic bags requires millions of gallons of petroleum that could be used for transportation or heating

None of the above facts are new. We are all aware that plastic bags are unnecessary with easy alternatives.

We do not have time to wait.

What will it take to make major changes? We now know that we are literally eating, drinking and breathing plastic. We are not only sacrificing our well-being for profits of the plastic industry, but we are sacrificing future generations. As you consider your vote, consider this recent study finding:

“Microplastic Revealed in Placentas of Unborn Babies”.

Pat Hersey

9462 Farewell Rd.

Columbia, MD 21045

SB0223 - Plastic Bag Reduction Act - Testimony - J

Uploaded by: Jakuta, Joseph

Position: FAV

Senate Committee: Finance Committee

House Committee: Environment and Transportation Committee

Testimony on: SB 223/HB 314 - "Plastic Bag Reduction Act"

Organization: Individual

Person Submitting: Joseph Jakuta

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 28, 2021

Joseph Jakuta, as resident of District 47A, supports SB 223/HB 314, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

My weekends are often spent going on hikes with my two small children in Maryland's great state parks, jogging along the trails that follow the Anacostia River, or taking bike rides throughout the state. Nearly every day of the week, prior to Covid-19, I also walk to the bus stop with my eldest child to send him off to school or walk my dog throughout the City of Mount Rainier and neighboring Brentwood. And wherever I go from the most pristine parks of Western Maryland to the alley behind our neighborhood small businesses there are plastic bags everywhere. In the trees, on the streets, in the streams, in the parks... Through all of these experiences I can say for certain it is time for a change, it is time to ban single-use bags.

I also have led numerous litter pick ups around Mount Rainier as the chair of the Mount Rainier Green Team. I also regularly participate in the Anacostia Watershed Society's Earth Day clean up as a site leader. I also, before Covid-19, went on plogs (a plog is where someone jogs and collects trash as they run). In all these instances there seems to be no limit to how many disposable bags there are that are tarnishing our beautiful state. And volunteers can only do so much to clean up a mess we aren't even responsible for. It is time for a systematic change. It is time to join California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon, and Vermont and ban disposable plastic bags.

Since Covid-19 this problem has gotten worse in many ways. The first one that comes to mind is that people, such as myself, are less likely to pick up litter they encounter. There was also a proliferation of use of single-use plastic bags in response to the virus itself, this despite the fact that it is an airborne virus and many virologists have come out saying that reusable bags don't lead to the spread of diseases.¹ But Covid-19 has also made something else clear, we simply cannot count on the goodness of volunteers and neighbors to keep Maryland beautiful, we need a systemic solution. And this legislation is part of the answer.

To help with evidence as to the problem I also attached some pictures from plogs I have completed pre-Covid in 2020 as an attachment. I will attest that these pictures could easily be taken to this day.

I encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

¹ https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Health-Expert-Statement_125-experts.pdf

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 1

Quite a plastic bag haul for my first run of the New Year in MD-47 along the NW Branch. Resolve to support the MD Plastic Bag Ban in 2020.
[@anacostiaws](#) [@TrashFreeMD](#)



4

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 5

Small, but very wet and yucktastic plastic bag haul on today's dog walk.
[#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



1

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 11

Beautiful white bag in a tree in Mount Rainier. [#MDBagBan2020](#)
[#TrashFreeMD](#)



Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 25

The end of another run through the beautiful plastic bag lined streets of suburban Maryland. [#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 26

Another plastic bag full run through MD22 & MD47. So many bags y'all get two tweets today! [#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 26

Another plastic bag full run through MD22 & MD47. And here is the second tweet. [#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



1

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 27

Only one bag per block found on a quick lunchtime dog walk to the park in suburban Maryland. #MDBagBan2020 #TrashFreeMD



1

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 1

Another plastic bag full dog walk along the Anacostia NW Branch. Glad @anacostiaws, @TrashFreeMD, @MDSierraClub and others are working hard to end this! #MDBagBan2020 #TrashFreeMD



1

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 2

Another plastic bag #plog in MD47. Note this is the same 1/4 mile I did on yesterday's dog walk. Glad @AugustineMLA and @JulianiveyPG are sponsoring bills to end this scourge. #MDBagBan2020 #TrashFreeMD



2

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 9

I scampered through part of 47B along the NW Branch on my #plog today. Glad to see that @WanikaFisher is working to end this problem by co-sponsoring the #MDBagBan2020. #TrashFreeMD



1

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 17

Lovely day for a holiday dog walk around Mount Rainier. Surprised at the small bag haul. Still 5 bags too many. #TrashFreeMD #MDBagBan2020



1

Anne Arundel County_FAV_SB223.pdf

Uploaded by: Johnston, Matthew

Position: FAV



January 28, 2021

Senate Bill 223
Plastic Bag Reduction Act
Committee: Finance

Position: FAVORABLE

This bill provides a solution to financial and environmental burdens related to the circulation of single-use plastic bags in Anne Arundel County. The bill also provides the industry, counties and consumers reasonable time to phase out thin-film, single-use plastic bags, and places no additional cost burden on consumers.

The continued proliferation of thin-film, single-use plastic bags has a financial impact to Anne Arundel County taxpayers. In 2019, the County was charged an additional \$360,000 by our recycling contractor for placing non-recyclable materials in recycling bins. Much of this non-recyclable material was thin-film plastic, such as that used for single-use plastic bags. The plastic bags can clog recycling machinery, become shredded, and “contaminate” the entire load of recyclables. When such contamination occurs, the entire load of recyclables is diverted to a landfill.

From 2016 through 2019, the County spent approximately \$100,000 on outreach efforts to educate citizens that plastic bags and other non-recyclable materials should not be placed into recycling bins. Additionally, the County spent almost \$200,000 cleaning up litter in 2019, much of which consisted of single-use plastic bags.

Anne Arundel County expects these taxpayer-funded costs will be reduced by removing one of the most problematic materials from circulation: single-use plastic bags.

For these reasons, the Anne Arundel County Administration requests a FAVORABLE vote on SB 223.

Waterfront Partnership testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindquist, Adam

Position: FAV



Testimony on SB 0223 and HB 0314
Maryland's Bag Ban
Position: Favorable

January 25, 2021
Maryland House of Delegates and State Senate

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore submits this testimony in support of SB 0223 and HB 0314, the Ban on Plastic Bags, which would prohibit stores from distributing plastic carryout bags.

Waterfront Partnership is a Business Improvement District responsible for maintaining, improving, and protecting the Inner Harbor. We represent the interests of businesses and developers located along the Baltimore Waterfront. Through our Healthy Harbor Initiative, these businesses have supported a City and State ban on foam containers, installed the world's first solar and hydro powered trash interceptor (Mr. Trash Wheel), and advocated for legislation aimed at reducing litter in our neighborhoods, streams, and harbor. We do these things because they are good for the environment but also because a clean environment is good for business.

Since 2014, when we installed Mr. Trash Wheel, **we have removed over 900,000 plastic bags** from the Baltimore Harbor. That's on average 10,000 plastic bags a month!

Waterfront Partnership currently spends \$200,000 a year to remove trash from the water, but this is not a long-term solution. Ultimately, we must change behaviors so that less litter ends up on the ground in the first place. That is because litter on the ground is carried into the Harbor by storm drains, which are located throughout the City. Banning plastic bags will eliminate plastic bags from the litter stream while ensuring that the public is encouraged to use their own reusable.

We use funding we receive from the business community to pick up litter, but we would rather spend it on events, landscaping, and attractions for residents, like the new Rash Field Skate Park. A bill like Maryland's Bag Ban, which promotes behavior change and reduces litter, means we can do just that. We respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Contact:
Adam W. Lindquist
Manager, Healthy Harbor Initiative
Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore
(443) 743-3309
Adam@WaterfrontPartnership.org



Kayaker in Gwynns Falls stream paddles past a tree containing dozens of plastic bags

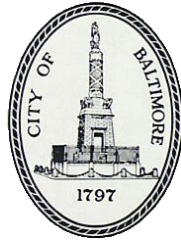


Volunteers stand in front of a pile of 1,337 plastic bags collected from the Baltimore Harbor in just one day

SB0223-FIN-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Mehu, Natasha

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 223

January 28, 2021

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: SENATE BILL 223 – PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION ACT

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 223.

Senate Bill 223 would prohibit a store from distributing plastic single-use carry out bags to a customer at the point of sale. Certain exemptions to the prohibition are included. The legislation also preempts the authority of a County or municipality to enact similar prohibitions. Fees for the use of alternate carryout bags may only be required if adopted by a County or municipality on or before February 1, 2021.

Baltimore City, like many other Maryland jurisdictions, struggles with the problem of litter in its streets and waterways. The increase of plastic debris in the world's oceans is a growing crisis. By reducing the use of plastic bags and packaging at the source, SB 223 would benefit the goal of waste reduction as outlined in the City's 2019 Sustainability Plan and the more recent Less Waste Better Baltimore plan.

To help advance our local goals, last year Baltimore City adopted a ban on plastic bags, which requires a 5-cent fee be collected for alternate carryout bags (including compostable plastic bags) and defines a plastic carryout bag more narrowly. SB 223 takes the right steps to expand and suitably apply what is occurring locally in Baltimore City and a few other jurisdictions to a statewide level.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 223.

TESTIMONY FOR SB0223 Plastic Bag Reduction Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Plante, Cecilia

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0223 PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION ACT

Bill Sponsor: Senator Augustine

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0223 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our Coalition members support the reduction, and actually the elimination of plastic bags in our state. In other countries, plastic is not available. Compostable bags are provided in grocery stores and people bring their own reusable bags. Getting rid of plastic bags is an important way to reduce our carbon footprint.

This bill will **FINALLY** prohibit a store or a retail establishment from distributing plastic carry-out bags to a consumer at point-of-sale. It also sets a penalty for violating the prohibition at \$500 or less.

It allows the state can to enact laws prohibiting, restricting or regulating the use of plastic bags less than 4 millimeters thick and it provides an exception for counties and municipalities that have already set fees for the use of plastic bags over 4mils so they can continue to charge the fees.

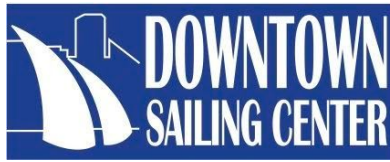
This is a giant step forward in reducing our reliance on plastic and becoming better environmental stewards.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

HB0314 Witness Supporting Ban The DSC.pdf

Uploaded by: Proctor, Stuart

Position: FAV



January 25th, 2021

Stuart T. Proctor
The Downtown Sailing Center

RE: Support of 2021 Maryland House Bill HB0314 "Plastic Bag Reduction Act"

To Whom it Concerns,

As the Executive Director of The Downtown Sailing Center in Baltimore, I fully support Delegate Lierman's proposed bill HB0314 for the 2021 legislative session. Plastic bags, by the thousands, litter our streets and storm drains before they end up in our harbors. Prolific, the plastic bags float around for weeks before washing up on our shores or breaking into thousands of little pieces. Our diverse sailors deserve a cleaner, healthier boating environment.

Plastic carryout bags are bad for our business. Who wants to go boating when bags float in the water? The Downtown Sailing Center's bottom line is negatively impacted by the inaction of Maryland's legislature on this issue. Our summer campers cannot even play by the water's edge because of the trash that litters our shores. Plastic carryout bags do not reduce our litter crisis: they dramatically add to it. The bag plague is not just in urban areas, either. Take a walk down to Ego Alley and see firsthand the effects of your inaction.

Science shows that even "compostable" and "biodegradable" bags introduce toxins and microplastics to our environment... if they make it that far. Bags trap marine life, are mistakenly eaten as food, smother aquatic vegetation, and end up in our food chain. There is no other solution to reducing their impact. Just like smoking, consumption will not be reduced to suitable levels unless there is government intervention. Marylanders need the state legislature to "ban the bag." I implore you to do your part: vote to pass Bill HB0314.

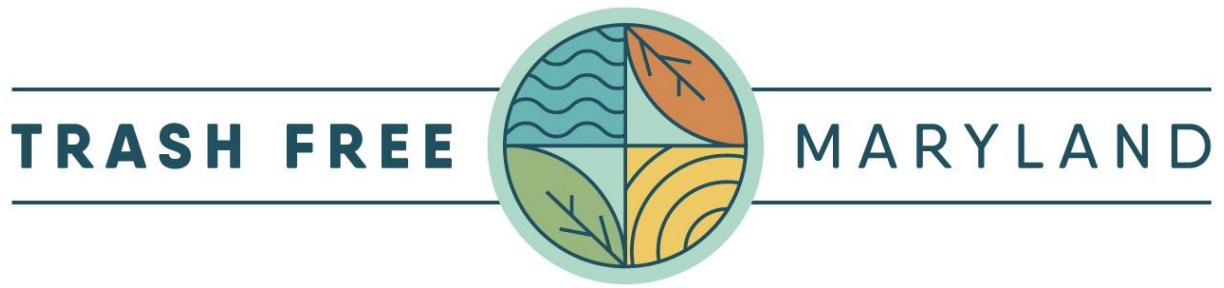
Sincerely,

Stuart T. Proctor
Executive Director

SB 223 - PBRA Written Testimony - TFMD - Robinson.

Uploaded by: Robinson, Shane

Position: FAV



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

IPC Testimony 2021 - Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Rose, Jodi

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY ON SB 223**Position: FAVORABLE****January 28, 2021****Finance Committee**

Chairwoman Delores Kelly and Members of the Committee:

We support the Plastic Bag Reduction Act (SB 223) which will ban plastic bags with a thickness of less than 4 mils. We understand that if retailers wish to provide bags greater than 4 mils thick to their customers, they may do so at their convenience or choose to charge a fee. While we would prefer plastic bags not be offered whatsoever, we feel this bill is a good step in the right direction to reduce waste from single-use plastics.

First of all, we want to thank the General Assembly for its leadership in reducing plastic pollution through a ban on foam food packaging two years ago. Last year, during the truncated session, a plastic bag ban received strong support before the pandemic interfered with efforts to advance environmental legislation. We are confident in your leadership in supporting a bag ban that is good for the planet and good for all Marylanders.

Faith leaders are increasingly concerned about the throw-away culture of our society.

- The culture that idolizes economic gain at the expense of the poor, the environment, and future generations.
- The culture that seems to have forgotten that there's something seriously wrong with extracting fossil fuels that have been in the ground for millions of years in order to produce a plastic bag that will be used once and thrown away.
- The culture that expects jurisdictions to pay to remove unsightly trash from parkways, rivers, and tree branches, simply because we feel it is inconvenient to be asked to stop using plastic bags. The economic harm caused to jurisdictions for having to clean up these shared spaces takes away from the economic good our jurisdictions could be investing in instead.

In congregations operating on the margins of society, the most commonly reported environmental problem they struggle with is oppressive trash in their neighborhoods and local streams. This plastic waste is what our marginalized neighbors see when they go out for a walk.

There are many complex pollution problems in Maryland, and this is one solution in which everyone can participate. A ban on plastic bags of 4 mil thickness is easy to understand and applies to everyone without bias.

We must live in harmony with all of Creation around us, and this legislation encourages us to change our behavior to more closely align with what we know in our heart is the right way to live. It is time Maryland ends our damaging **addiction to convenience**. IPC envisions a time when using reusable bags will be as second-nature as putting on your seat belt, and when today's throw-away culture is a thing of the past.

Our organization stands ready to help educating the public about this bill and helping congregations educate their members.

Thank you for considering our testimony in support of SB223.

Sincerely,

Jodi Rose
Executive Director

SB 223 Written Testimony - Jacob Ross - Oceana.pdf

Uploaded by: Ross, Jacob

Position: FAV



Bill: SB 223

Date: January 25, 2021

Position: Support

Plastic Bag Reduction Act

SB 223

Support

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of SB 223, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act. Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation. With our 17,800 supporters across Maryland, we are working to advance science-based policies at the federal, state, and local level that will restore the ocean's abundance and biodiversity. We submit this testimony to share our strong support for SB 223 and to urge you to pass this important legislation.

Plastic Pollution and Plastic Bags Are a Growing Problem for Ocean Health

Plastic pollution is a growing threat to the world's oceans, as well as our economy, food, health, and climate. Each year, an estimated 33 billion pounds of plastic enters the marine environment. This is roughly equivalent to two garbage trucks full of plastic being dumped into the oceans every minute.¹

¹ Forrest A, Giacobazzi L, Dunlop S, *et al.* (2019) Eliminating Plastic Pollution: How a Voluntary Contribution From Industry Will Drive the Circular Plastics Economy. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 6: 627.

Plastic pollution is everywhere. Scientists have found plastic floating on the surface of the ocean, washing up on the world's most remote coastlines, melting in Arctic sea ice, raining onto the Rocky Mountains, and even sitting at the deepest part of the ocean floor.^{2,3,4,5}

Nearly 40% of all plastic produced is for packaging, including plastic bags. Most of this packaging is used only once, but the material it's made of was created to last for centuries.⁶

Plastic is harming our native wildlife and contaminating our waterways.⁷ Home to over 3,600 plant and animal species, the Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the country and is an important part of the state's identity and economy. But it's being impacted by our dependence on single-use plastics - according to a 2014 study, microplastics were found in 59 out of 60 water samples from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.⁸ And according to National Public Radio, WBUR, Mr. Trash Wheel in Baltimore's Inner Harbor has collected 627,000 plastic bags as of April 2019.⁹

A piece of plastic can look like food to a fish, turtle, marine mammal, or bird. In a report published in 2020, Oceana found evidence of nearly 1,800 marine mammal and sea turtles from 40 different species swallowing or becoming entangled in plastic in U.S. waters since 2009. Of those animals, a staggering 88% were from species listed as endangered or threatened with extinction under the Endangered Species Act. According to this report, plastic bags are one of the most common, identifiable forms of plastic impacting wildlife. In fact, plastic bags were found entangling and being consumed by animals in 80 cases, some of which were species that frequent Maryland's waters. Cases of plastic ingestion from the region include a 2016 Maryland animal-rescue operation that discovered plastic inside a dead loggerhead sea turtle. Just last year in Virginia, a dead minke whale was found with a plastic bag in its stomach. While we can't be sure if the bag caused this whale to die, we know for certain that marine animals are ingesting plastic, and that a single piece of it can be fatal.¹⁰

² Lavers JL and Bond JL (2017) Exceptional and rapid accumulation of anthropogenic debris on one of the world's most remote and pristine islands. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114: 6052-6055. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1619818114

³ Chiba S, Saito H, Fletcher R, et al. (2018) Human footprint in the abyss: 30 year records of deep-sea plastic debris. *Marine Policy* 96: 204-212. doi: 10.1016/j.marpol.2018.03.022

⁴ Peeken I, Primpke S, Beyer B, et al. (2018) Arctic sea ice is an important temporal sink and means of transport for microplastic. *Nature Communications* 9 doi: 10.1038/s41467-018-03825-5

⁵ Wetherbee G, Baldwin A and Ranville J (2019) It is raining plastic: Open-File Report 2019-1048. *United States Geological Survey*. doi: 10.3133/ofr20191048

⁶ Geyer R, Jambeck JR and Law KL (2017) Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. *Science Advances* 3. doi: 10.1126/sciadv.1700782

⁷ Soper S (2019) Assateague Horse Incident Highlights Balloon Dangers. The Dispatch. Available: <https://mdcoastdispatch.com/2019/05/29/assateague-horse-incident-highlights-balloon-dangers/>. Accessed Feb 19, 2020.

⁸ Yonkos LT, Friedel EA, Perez-Reyes AC, Ghosal S and Arthur CD (2014) Microplastic in four estuarine rivers in the Chesapeake Bay, U.S.A. *Environmental Science & Technology* 48: 14195-14202. doi: 10.1021/es5036317

⁹ Peter O'Dowd. (2019, April 16). Meet Mr. Trash Wheel: Baltimore Harbor's Googly Eyed Garbage Gobbler. In Here and Now. National Public Radio. <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2019/04/16/mr-trash-wheel-baltimore>

¹⁰ Warner K, Linske E, Mustain P, Valliant M, Leavitt C. November 2020. "Choked, Strangled, Drowned: The Plastics Crisis Unfolding in Our Oceans." Oceana. Washington, D.C.

Plastic Pollution Threatens Maryland's Coastal Tourism Industry

Global production of plastic is now projected to increase at least fourfold between 2014 and 2050.¹¹ As plastic production increases, so will the amount of plastic that enters the ocean. This poses a direct threat to coastal tourism and other local businesses that depend on a healthy and clean marine environment. In Maryland, a healthy Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean support over 96,000 jobs and \$6 billion in GDP.¹²

Healthy ocean resources define the way of life for communities across Maryland. The Eastern Shore is particularly known for incredible catches of blue crab and Assateague Island's pristine beaches. Destinations like Ocean City, and the major port cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, attract millions of visitors and generate billions of dollars each year. A healthy bay also fosters productive commercial fishing in the Atlantic, driving the coastal economy with large catches of blue crab, clams, perch, striped bass, sea trout, and flounder. But plastic bags and plastic pollution could threaten these valuable resources.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) funded a study that found that marine debris, including plastic pollution, can affect beachgoer behavior, impacting coastal tourism and a state's economy. The study reveals that doubling marine debris on beaches in coastal Delaware and Maryland would result in a decrease of the number visitor days that people spend on beaches by nearly 3.5 million, causing a decrease in tourism spending by \$254 million, and a loss of 3,300 local jobs.¹³

Eliminating plastic bags and moving towards a stronger, zero waste economy represents an opportunity to bring new jobs to Maryland. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance and Zero Waste Associates prepared Baltimore's Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste, a step-by-step guide to transitioning the city away from incineration and toward recycling, composting and reuse. Implementing the plan's recommendations, including banning single-use plastics and expanding composting/recycling, could create 1,800 jobs within two years.¹⁴

Ignoring the risk of plastic bag pollution endangers the future of Maryland's healthy ocean resources and hinders the growth of thriving coastal economies.

¹¹ GRID-Arendal and Maphoto/Riccardo Pravettoni (2016) Marine Litter Vital Graphics: Global plastic production and future trends. GRID-Arendal. Available: http://old.grida.no/graphicslib/detail/global-plastic-production-and-future-trends_b584. Source: (2016) Marine Litter Vital Graphics. United Nations Environment Programme and GRID-Arendal. 57p.

¹² Maryland's Clean Coast Economy. Oceana. 2p. <https://usa.oceana.org/publications/reports/clean-coast-economy>

¹³ Bear Peak Economics, C. R. (2019). *The Effects of Marine Debris on Beach Recreation and Regional Economies in Four Coastal Communities: A Regional Pilot Study*. Boulder, CO: Abt Associates.

¹⁴ Platt, N. (2020, March 14). Report: Baltimore's Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste. Retrieved January 25, 2021, from <https://ilsr.org/report-baltimore-zero-waste/> p. 16

Solution: Reduce Plastic Pollution at the Source

Recycling is not enough to solve the plastic pollution crisis. Waste-management solutions have not adequately dealt with plastic pollution in the past and cannot realistically keep up with the rising rates of plastic production. Only 9% of all the plastic waste ever produced has been recycled.¹⁵ The rest of it has been incinerated, landfilled, or lost in the environment.

Policies governing the production and use of single-use plastic are the most effective way to stem the flow of it into our oceans, bays, and wetlands, and these policies are becoming more common all around the world. While multiple countries have taken national action, the United States has so far failed to implement a nationwide policy that comprehensively addresses the plastics crisis threatening our future.

Thankfully, local communities are acting by passing policies limiting the use of single-use plastic and banning bags. Takoma Park, Chestertown, Westminster, Montgomery County, Howard County and most recently Baltimore City have all passed legislation that either prohibits the sale of plastic bags or charges a fee for them. Communities across Maryland are calling on the Maryland General Assembly to ban plastic bags; we testify today in hopes that you'll join them.

We strongly support SB 223, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act. We believe this bill will reduce the amount of plastic pollution that impacts the Chesapeake Bay, marine life along the Atlantic coast, and local economies. Passing SB 223 would be a critical step in reducing plastic pollution at the source and addressing the pollution concerns of communities across the state.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify and urge you to pass this important legislation to reduce plastic pollution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacob Ross', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jacob Ross, Mid-Atlantic Campaign Organizer, Oceana
jross@oceana.org

¹⁵ Geyer R, Jambeck JR and Law KL (2017) Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. Science Advances 3: e1700782. doi: 10.1126/sciadv.1700782

SB 223 - MoCo (GA 21).pdf

Uploaded by: Samman, Amy

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 223

DATE: January 26, 2021

SPONSOR: Senator Augustine

ASSIGNED TO: Finance

CONTACT PERSON: Amy Samman (amy.samman@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support

Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Senate Bill 223 prohibits retail establishments from distributing plastic carryout bags less than 4 mils thick to customers beginning July 1, 2022, and requires county governments to enforce the ban. The bill prohibits local governments from enacting a law or ordinance requiring retail establishments to charge for nonplastic bags and plastic bags more than 4 mils thick unless authorized by the State. However, there is an exception for any county or municipality that enacted a law or ordinance that requires retail establishments to “charge and collect a fee, tax or other charge” on nonplastic and plastic bags more than 4 mils thick prior to February 1, 2021.

Montgomery County supports Senate Bill 223. In 2012, Montgomery County enacted a \$0.05 excise tax on both paper and plastic disposable carryout bags. Under County ordinance, the retailer retains \$0.01 and the County receives \$0.04. The County’s tax is intended to act as an incentive to help consumers rethink their need for disposable bags. The revenue from the bag tax goes directly into the County’s Department of Environmental Protection’s Water Quality Protection Fund – a dedicated fund for water quality improvement activities. The total revenue generated from the bag tax since its inception is approximately \$20 million. This has had a tremendous impact on the County’s initiatives to improve the water quality of streams and reduce the impacts of stormwater. Water quality programs include: inspection and maintenance of stormwater management facilities; restoration of polluted and eroded streams; watershed restoration to add stormwater controls and improve local water quality; stream monitoring; and storm drain cleaning and maintenance. A ban on the distribution of plastic carryout bags less than 4 mils thick could reduce the number of bags in our waterways and further the County’s efforts to improve water quality.

For the foregoing reasons, Montgomery County supports Senate Bill 223 and respectfully requests a favorable Committee report.

MOS SB0223 Single Use Plastic Bags January 2021.pdf

Uploaded by: Schwarz, Kurt

Position: FAV



January 26, 2021

SB0223: Plastic Bag Reductions Act

Position: Support: SB0223

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) asks that the Senate Finance Committee give a favorable report of SB0223 and move it to the full House of Delegates.

Plastics present a serious threat to bird life, as well as other wildlife. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, plastic marine debris has been found in 86% of sea turtles, 44% of seabirds, and 43% of marine mammals. Once consumed, this plastic debris can cause internal and external wounds, impair feeding by blockage of the digestive system, decrease mobility and the ability to avoid predation, and prove toxic. It can also reduce body weight, inhibit fat deposition, and reduce reproductive capacity.¹ The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration commissioned the National Park Service and Clemson University to quantify microplastics on National Park beaches from 2015 to 2017. Thirty-seven beaches in 35 National Parks, Monuments, Seashores, and Recreation Areas were sampled and microplastics and microfibers were found at all 37 beaches. Microfibers made up 97% of the debris found. Microplastics and microfibers were found even on remote Alaskan beaches.²

Single-use plastic bags are a significant source of plastic debris. We have all seen them stuck in trees, fences, along road ways, which demonstrates just how far they can travel, winding up in streams, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay, and ultimately the ocean.

Our bird populations are in steep decline. A recent study showed that North America lost 3 billion birds, 29% of its total bird population, since the 1970s.³ Plastic pollution adds to that toll on our birdlife. As we have noted before, it is especially acute in the marine environment. Many of our members travel to Ocean City, in particular in the winter months, the deep off-season, to observe such species at Long-tailed and Harlequin Ducks, King and Common Eider, Red-throated and

¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency, Impacts of Mismanaged Trash, July 30, 2020, <https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters/impacts-mismanaged-trash#plastic>

² NOAA Marine Debris Program, Quantification of Microplastics on National Park Beaches, January 22, 2021, <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/reports/quantification-microplastics-national-park-beaches>

³ Rosenberg, et al, Decline of the North American Avifauna, *Science*, vol 366, issue 6461, pp. 120-124, 4 October 2019, <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/366/6461/120>

Common Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, gulls, Alcids such as Razorbill and Dovekie, and Purple Sandpiper. In warmer months, we seek the comical American Oystercatcher, herons and egrets, and the federally threatened Piping Plover. Birders are a substantial economic force, an estimated 900,000 residents and non-residents enjoy birding in the state. While Marylanders generated \$483 million from wildlife-watching activities in 2011, the Total Industrial Output (TIO), which includes, direct, indirect, and induced effects, totaled over \$909 million, produced 10,807 full- and part-time jobs, and generated \$88.4 million in state and local tax revenue. Nationally, Americans who watch and feed birds contribute \$41 billion to the nation's economy every year.⁴

Single-use plastic bags present a substantial threat to Maryland Wildlife and throughout the world. And they are an ugly eyesore wherever the winds take them. We therefore ask you to favorably report the bill and move it to the Senate Floor. And once before the full Senate, that you continue to support and pass the Plastic Bag Reduction Act (SB0223).

MOS is a Maryland-based volunteer organization of some 1200 members, with 15 chapters in Maryland. We are devoted to the study and preservation of birds and their habitat.

Sincerely,



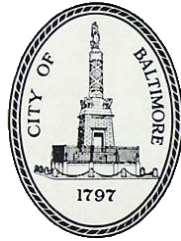
Kurt R. Schwarz
Conservation Chair
Maryland Ornithological Society
www.mdbirds.org
9045 Dunloggin Ct.
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-461-1643
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⁴ US Fish and Wildlife Service, Economic Impact: Birds, Birdwatching and the U.S. Economy, November 16, 2017, <https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/bird-watching/valuing-birds.php>

SB0223-FIN-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Scott, Brandon

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 223

January 28, 2021

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: SENATE BILL 223 – PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION ACT

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 223.

Senate Bill 223 would prohibit a store from distributing plastic single-use carry out bags to a customer at the point of sale. Certain exemptions to the prohibition are included. The legislation also preempts the authority of a County or municipality to enact similar prohibitions. Fees for the use of alternate carryout bags may only be required if adopted by a County or municipality on or before February 1, 2021.

Baltimore City, like many other Maryland jurisdictions, struggles with the problem of litter in its streets and waterways. The increase of plastic debris in the world's oceans is a growing crisis. By reducing the use of plastic bags and packaging at the source, SB 223 would benefit the goal of waste reduction as outlined in the City's 2019 Sustainability Plan and the more recent Less Waste Better Baltimore plan.

To help advance our local goals, last year Baltimore City adopted a ban on plastic bags, which requires a 5-cent fee be collected for alternate carryout bags (including compostable plastic bags) and defines a plastic carryout bag more narrowly. SB 223 takes the right steps to expand and suitably apply what is occurring locally in Baltimore City and a few other jurisdictions to a statewide level.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 223.

Plastic Bag Reduction Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Shangold, Natasha

Position: FAV

Plastic Bag Reduction Act - SB0223/ HB314

Bags Dangers of Plastic Bags

- 160,000 plastic bags are used globally every second!
- 5 trillion plastic bags are produced yearly. Side by side, they can encircle the world 7 times.
- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which is a floating landfill of garbage in the Pacific twice the size of Texas, is mostly composed of plastic.
- In 2008, a sperm whale was found beached in California. It died due to the more than 22 kilos of plastic found in its stomach.
- Plastic will only start degrading after 700 years and will only fully degrade in 1000 years. This means that all the plastic that has ever been produced has not degraded yet.
- Plastic bags remain toxic even after it breaks down. It doesn't biodegrade, it photo-degrades. It means that after it degrades, it breaks down into smaller and smaller toxic bits of itself – and bleeds and contaminates the environment.
- An average family will use 60 plastic bags on four visits to the supermarket.
- Only 1 to 3% of plastic bags are recycled worldwide.
- Plastic bags cause the death of many marine animals when they are mistaken for food.
- Plastic bags were introduced to supermarkets in 1977.
- In the North Pacific Ocean, there are 6x more plastic debris than plankton.
- Plastic bags are produced using petroleum, natural gas and other chemicals. Its production is toxic to the environment.

Source: <https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/interesting-facts-about-plastic-bags>

10 Facts About Single-use Plastic Bags

1. Americans use [100 billion plastic bags a year](#), which require 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture.
2. It only takes about [14 plastic bags](#) for the equivalent of the gas required to drive one mile.
3. The average American family takes home almost [1,500 plastic shopping bags a year](#).
4. According to Waste Management, [only 1 percent of plastic bags are returned for recycling](#). That means that the average family only recycles 15 bags a year; the rest end up in landfills or as litter.
5. [Up to 80 percent of ocean plastic pollution](#) enters the ocean from land.
6. At least [267 different species](#) have been affected by plastic pollution in the ocean.
7. [100,000 marine animals](#) are killed by plastic bags annually.
8. [One in three leatherback sea turtles](#) have been found with plastic in their stomachs.
9. Plastic bags are used for an average of [12 minutes](#).
10. It takes [500 \(or more\) years](#) for a plastic bag to degrade in a landfill. Unfortunately, the bags don't break down completely but instead photo-degrade, becoming microplastics that absorb toxins and continue to pollute the environment.

Source:

https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/sustainability/plastic_bag_facts.html

Simons Testimony Plastic Bag Bill written testimon

Uploaded by: Simons, Dan

Position: FAV

Dan Simons

Restaurateur, Founding Farmers, Farmers & Distillers, Farmers Fishers Bakers

Bill #: HB 314 and SB 223

Position on the Bill: Support the intent, but not as written.

Good afternoon. My name is Dan Simons; I'm a co-owner of seven restaurants. One of my restaurants, called Founding Farmers, is located in Montgomery County, Maryland. My other restaurants are in DC, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. I'm also a co-owner of a Distillery, Founding Spirits.

I am a businessperson and a restaurateur. I understand the negative impact unnecessary regulations can have on a business. I know very well the vital need for profit. I understand tax burdens and rising wages, P&L statements, and Balance Sheets. I understand the impact of the pandemic on my businesses and across the retail, restaurant, and hospitality industries. I have almost 30 years of experience in the restaurant industry, and I have been an owner for the past 15 years. I know this is a competitive business with high costs.

I am here today to state my clear support for the legislative movement to ban plastic bags. I am thrilled you are immersing in the topic and exploring steps in the right direction. I support the Bill as-is, but frankly, this bill does not go far enough. I believe it allows for some exceptions where they aren't needed – for example, supermarkets should be required to offer compostable bags in their produce sections rather than using plastic bags.

I promise, businesses do not need plastic bags in order to succeed. We can thrive with bio- and marine-degradable alternatives. We can thrive by educating consumers that they can re-use bags. We can thrive by passing legislation that shows investors and manufacturers they have a huge opportunity to invest in innovation and create new products that don't require fossil fuels to make, and don't litter the planet for hundreds of years after a single use.

I can debate and debunk any businessperson or related business association that takes the position that plastic bags are necessary for success. And I'm not alone; as plenty of mindful leaders of restaurants, retailers, and grocers have done. It does require some effort on behalf of the businessperson, but so what; effort, adaptation, innovation, that's what businesspeople should be doing. There's no value to the vast majority of stakeholders to protect the entrenched interest in the status quo of a very few stakeholders. These entrenched interests remind me of the voices who said we'd go out of business if banned smoking indoors, or in public – they were lies then, and they are lies now.

Single-use plastic bags provide a few minutes of upside, in return for hundreds of years of downside.

They don't get recycled, they don't get composted. They end up on our streets and shorelines, in our vital Chesapeake Bay, and in our oceans, where they essentially last

forever, slowly breaking down into microplastics; then they get eaten by the animals that humans consume. So, enjoy a fish sandwich today, and you may be eating tiny bits of a plastic bag used decades ago. The chemicals from plastics have been found in our ground water...and in our bodies. The health effects of ingesting microplastics are awful – when your kids or grandchildren get cancer from this sort of toxic soup, I promise, the cancer doesn't get care which side of the aisle you're on. Human health and environmental health affect all of us.

We can do better. We *have to do better*. The Chesapeake Bay is our jewel; why do we allow it, and our oceans, to be filled with plastic?

The solution is to use bags made of marine-degradable material, while being careful not be fooled by the marketing of some bioplastics, or businesses saying they can't afford alternatives.

In my restaurants we use primarily paper bags for togo. At certain times, I do use plastic bags – they are more convenient in some uses, they hold up much better than paper if they need to be kept in refrigeration – but, knowing the trade-off, I'd be fine to forgo forever using traditional plastic bags.

Solving plastic pollution is not a partisan issue; it is human issue. I'm a conscious capitalist; I'm able to win for my investors, my employees, my customers, AND my core values.

Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony.

Testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: Song, Oliver

Position: FAV

January 25, 2021

SUPPORT: SB0223 Plastic Bag Reduction Act 2021

Dear Members of the Committee,

The Howard County Conservancy Student Climate Change Institute strongly supports SB0223 Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

Plastic has always been a fishbone in the throat of this world. Humans are ever dependent on it, yet every second we mass-produce and discard it, we are killing our planet. This leads us to consider alternatives and how we can help to save our planet, which is ultimately to ban plastic bags, no matter how thick or how reusable they are.

However, this bill does raise the question of equity, which can be immediately resolved. The arguments against this ban would reason that the bag ban would cause an unfair burden to those at an economic disadvantage. Alternatives to plastic bags, such as paper and reusable bags, can be expensive. However, this ban does not come with a fee- it leaves it to the state and county levels to determine. Hence, we can rest assured that states and counties will do what is best for their constituents in determining fees on alternatives

Plastic bags have long caused harm to the environment. Every year, around 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide. Each bag needs 300 years to biodegrade in a landfill. They then break down into microplastics which contaminate the environment and the wildlife. Recently, it was discovered that microplastics were found in baby placentas. Isn't that shocking? Humans now ingest a little bit of plastic every single day- culminating to a point where babies are born with a side of microplastics. Additionally, bioplastics are not a viable alternative as of now. We cannot just replace one single-use plastic with another. They sound attractive on paper, but are incredibly difficult to compost and can only be handled by a separate industrial composting facility. Each bioplastic requires temperatures of at least 140 degrees F for 10 days straight to decompose. Additionally, they don't decompose in landfills at a quick enough rate and even if they do, they release methane, a chemical that is extremely toxic and detrimental to the environment.

Most people can do the right thing and just not use a single-use plastic bag. While an alternative will need to be developed for those who actually need them, the average person can totally just not use single-use plastic bags and bring their own reusable ones.

In August 2014, California became the first state to enact legislation imposing a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags at large retail stores. If a state as large as California can do it, then so can MD.

Thank you for dedicating your time on behalf of the Howard County Conservancy Student Climate Change Institute.

Oliver Song of Wilde Lake High School, Victoria Benitez of Oakland Mills High School,
Saketh Sundar of River Hill High School, and Zainab Zarnish of Reservoir High School

SB223_CBF_Support_CarmeraThomas.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas-Wilhite, Carmera

Position: FAV



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
Contact: Carmera Thomas, Baltimore
Program Manager, carmerathomas@cbf.org

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>.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403
Phone (410) 268-8816 • Fax (410) 280-3513

SB223 - Plastic Bag Reduction Act - FIN - Augustin

Uploaded by: Tulkin, Josh

Position: FAV



Maryland Chapter

7338 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 102
College Park, MD 20740-3211

Committee: Finance
Testimony on: SB223, Plastic Bag Reduction Act
Position: Support
Hearing Date: January 28, 2021

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB223, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act, one of our priority bills in 2021. This legislation would prohibit retailers from providing plastic carryout bags at the point of sale, as of July 1, 2022. The bill would not affect the authority of jurisdictions to collect an already enacted fee or tax on carryout bags not banned by the bill.

The world is facing a plastic pollution crisis, and carryout bags are a major culprit. Every year, our oceans take in an estimated 15 million tons of plastics.¹ Plastic bags are among the top five plastic products collected in beach cleanups in the U.S.² Littered plastic carryout bags are blown or washed into waterways and the oceans, where they degrade into small pieces and absorb toxic chemicals. Intact, or as microplastic particles, the bags are ingested by marine life, injuring and killing fish, seabirds, and marine mammals.³ On land, plastic bag litter blows far and wide until it is snagged by a tree or a fence. It can be lethal if ingested by livestock or wildlife. According to scientists, we may be ingesting up to a credit card's worth of plastic *every week*.⁴ These bags have about a 15-minute "working life," but last for centuries or more in the environment.

Worldwide, shoppers use an estimated one trillion plastic bags each year. About 100 billion plastic carryout bags are used annually in the U.S., roughly 305 bags per capita. Marylanders are thus contributing nearly two billion plastic carryout bags per year to this total.⁵ Fieldwork conducted by the Sierra Club and partners at Maryland grocery stores that provide free carryout bags found that 76% to 92% of shoppers use them, and nearly all bags are plastic (Exhibit 1, left column).⁶ In Baltimore Harbor, three trash wheels have captured 755,558 plastic grocery bags.⁷ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for trash on the Anacostia River and Baltimore Harbor, to which single-use plastic bags are a major contributor. This bill will help meet these targets by banning single-use plastic carryout bags.

Increased recycling cannot solve this problem. Only about 5% of plastic bags are recycled, according to the EPA. They are not accepted in curbside recycling programs because they foul the machinery and are too contaminated to be marketed. Removing the plastic film from the recycling

¹ Forrest, Andrew *et al.* 2019. "Eliminating Plastic Pollution: How a Voluntary Contribution from Industry Will Drive the Circular Plastics Economy," *Frontiers in Marine Science* 6:627, September 25, 2019. "Supplementary Materials."

² 5 Gyres Institute *et al.* Undated. "Better Alternatives Now: B.A.N. List 2.0". Los Angeles, California.

³ "The Problem of Marine Plastic Pollution": <https://www.cleanwater.org/problem-marine-plastic-pollution>

⁴ "How to Eat Less Plastic," *Consumer Reports*, June 2020.

⁵ Maryland's estimated 2020 population of 6.08 million x 305 bags/person.

⁶ Maryland Sierra Club Shopper Surveys, 2019-2020. With the help of over 120 volunteers from the Sierra Club, Less Plastic Please, Ocean City Surfrider, and Plastic-Free QAC, the carryout bag choices of more than 40,000 shoppers in 256 stores were observed in 13 counties (Calvert, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester) and the City of Baltimore. Results are presented in Exhibit 1, annexed.

⁷ www.mrtrashwheel.com

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

screens at the Prince George's County Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) is costing the facility upward of \$124,800 per year, by one estimate (Exhibit 2). The bags that are not recycled are landfilled, incinerated, or littered. Even if the recycling rate could be improved, it would not prevent littered plastic bags from entering the environment.

We can substantially reduce our use of single-use plastic bags by banning them statewide and incentivizing the use of reusable bags. Ten states and nearly 500 localities in the U.S. have enacted carryout bag laws, including neighboring Delaware, which banned plastic carryout bags as of January 1, 2021.⁸ Locally, Montgomery County has a 5-cent tax on plastic and paper carryout bags since 2012; the City of Baltimore has a ban on plastic carryout bags and a 5-cent surcharge on paper bags to go into effect in 2021; Howard County has a 5-cent fee on plastic bags in effect since October 1, 2020, and the towns of Chestertown, Takoma Park, and Westminster have plastic bag bans.

Plastic bag ban and fee laws are effective in changing shopper behavior and reducing plastic pollution. Studies have documented substantial reductions in disposable bag use and increases in reusable or no bag use associated with bag fee and bag ban policies.⁹ Montgomery County's 5-cent tax on plastic and paper carryout bags has cut the percentage of shoppers using single-use plastic bags by more than half, compared with adjacent Prince George's County without a fee (Exhibit 3). Nearly 60% of shoppers are opting for reusable bags or no bag at all, compared with only 12% in Prince George's County. As a result of Howard County's 5-cent fee on plastic carryout bags, half of shoppers are now using reusable bags or no bag, and the share using plastic had been cut by more than half.

This bill would ban single-use plastic carryout bags altogether, incentivizing the use of reusable bags or no bag at all. To further incentivize shoppers to switch to reusable bags for an even larger impact, retailers should consider charging for bags provided at checkout, just as they do for other merchandise. Sierra Club's fieldwork at Aldi and Lidl grocery chains that do not offer plastic carryout bags and charge for paper bags (7¢) and reusable plastic bags of various quality (10¢ or more) 85%-99% of shoppers bring reusable bags or take no bag at all (Exhibit 1, second column). This is a more transparent and equitable policy: only shoppers who take a bag pay for it, other shoppers are not footing the cost of "free" bags embedded in the store's overhead that they aren't using.

In sum, single-use plastic carryout bags are used for a very short time and stay in the environment forever. They are particularly harmful to the marine environment and now even threaten human health. By banning them statewide, this bill will incentivize the use of reusable bags or no bag and result in substantially less plastic bag litter on land, in the streams, and in the oceans. We need to enact this bill now so we can say goodbye to plastic bags in July 2022! **Every year that we wait, another 2 billion single-use plastic carryout bags are being released into the environment.** We respectfully request a favorable report on SB223.

Martha Ainsworth
Chair, Chapter Zero Waste Team
Martha.Ainsworth@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

⁸ CA, CT, DE, ME, NJ, NY, OR, VT, and WA have statewide bag laws; HI has a de facto statewide law because all counties have adopted ordinances. Source: www.PlasticBagLaws.org.

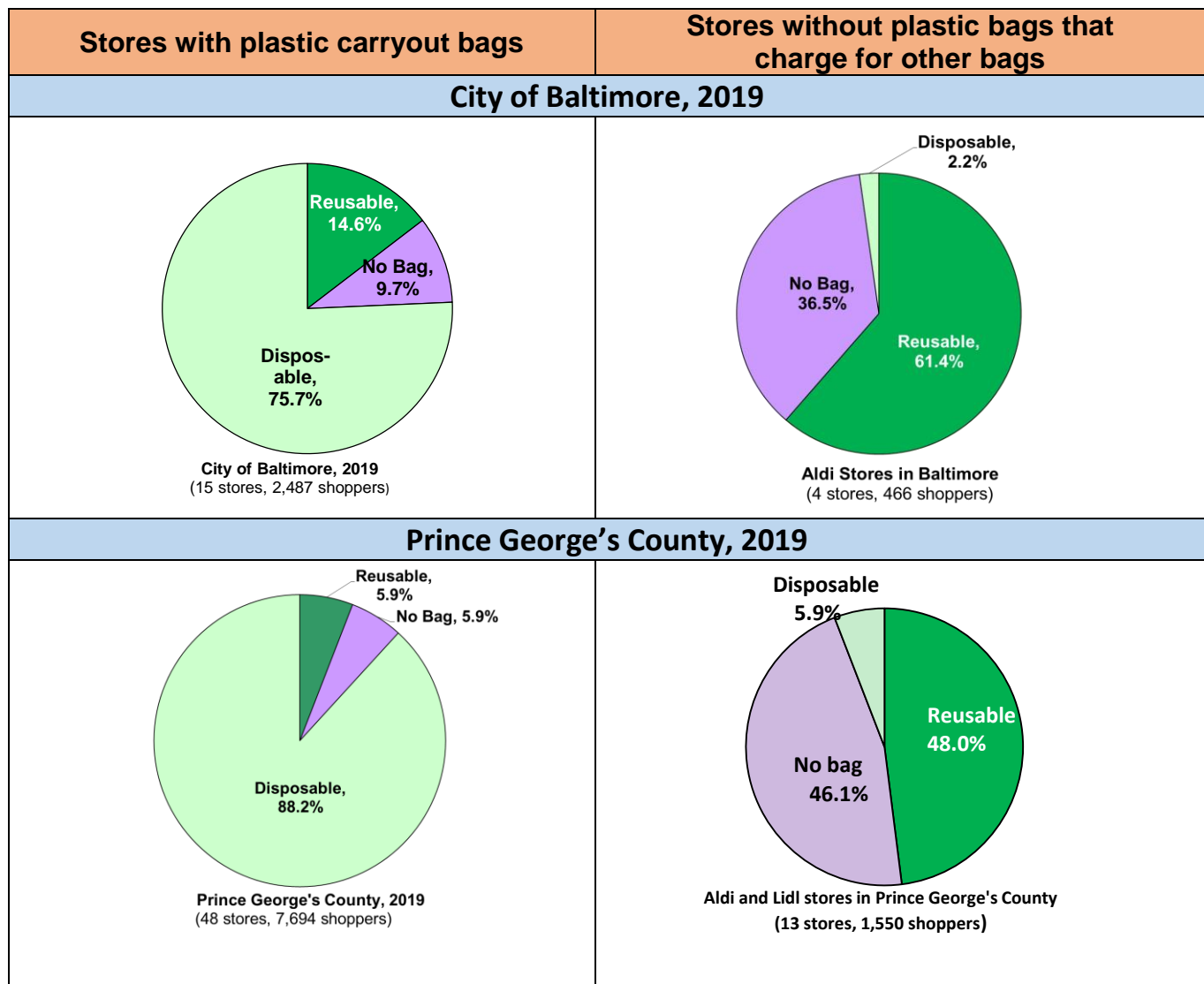
⁹ Homonoff, T. *et al.* 2018. "Skipping the Bag: Assessing the impact of Chicago's tax on disposable bags." New York University|Wagner and Ideas42, September. Armstrong, A. and E. O'Connell Chapman. 2017. "City of Aspen Single Use Bag Study." *Journal of Sustainability Education* 16, December. "Wegmans Announces Date for Elimination of Plastic Bags in All New York State Stores." Press release, Rochester, NY, January 6, 2020. For San Jose, California, see: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/environment/illegal-dumping-litter/bring-your-own-bag-ordinance>

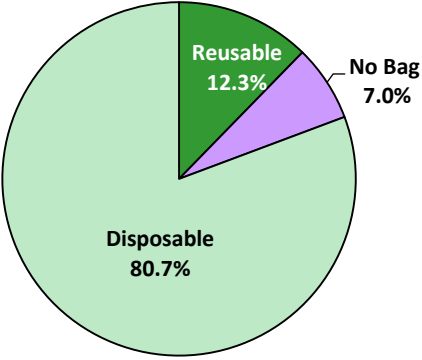
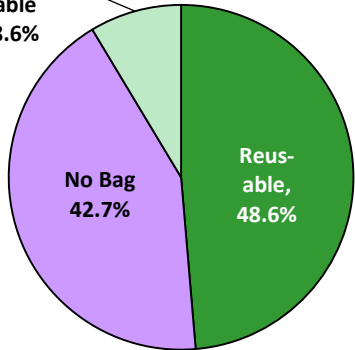
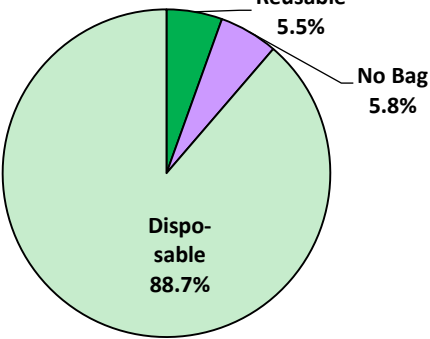
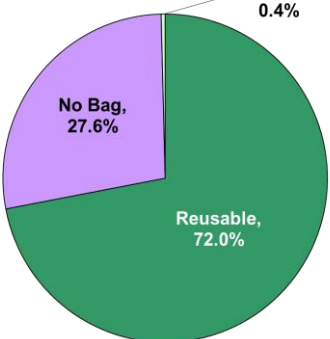
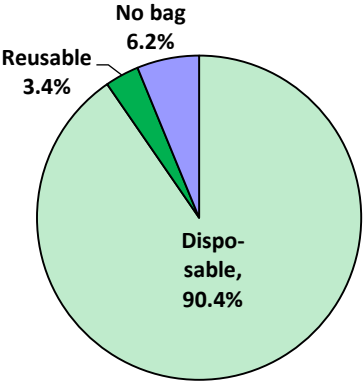
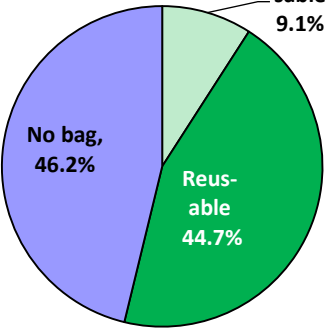
Exhibit 1. Results of the 2019-2020 Maryland Sierra Club Shopper Surveys

The Maryland Sierra Club Shopper Surveys conducted in 2019-2020 recorded the bag choices of shoppers exiting all of the stores in major grocery store chains in 13 Maryland counties and the City of Baltimore. Each store exit was monitored for one hour (for counties with many stores) or two hours (for counties with few stores) on a weekend shopping day. Altogether, the bag choices of nearly 40,000 shoppers were observed.

Below, for the 11 jurisdictions that did not have a bag fee or a ban, shoppers' bag choices are compared for two types of stores: (a) those that provided free single-use carryout bags (plastic or paper;) and (b) those that did not provide single-use plastic carryout bags and charged for other bags (paper and reusable).

- In most of the chains that provided free carryout bags, paper bags in principle were offered but often were not viewable or accessible. Seventy-six percent to 92% of shoppers took exclusively free disposable bags; overwhelmingly (98% or more) these were plastic carryout bags.
- In chains that did not provide plastic carryout bags and charged for paper and reusable bags, 85% - 99% brought their own bag or used no bag at all. Virtually all disposable bags were paper bags.



Stores with plastic carryout bags	Stores without plastic bags that charge for other bags
Frederick County, 2019	
 <p>Frederick County (20 stores, 2,588 shoppers)</p>	 <p>Aldi (Frederick County) (2 stores, 220 shoppers)</p>
Washington County, 2019	
 <p>Washington County (10 stores, 2,337 shoppers)</p>	 <p>Aldi & Lidl Stores in Washington County (2 stores, 246 shoppers)</p>
Southern Maryland, 2020	
 <p>Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's Counties (24 stores, 3,193 shoppers)</p>	 <p>Aldi & Lidl stores Charles & St. Mary's Counties (3 stores, 340 shoppers)</p>

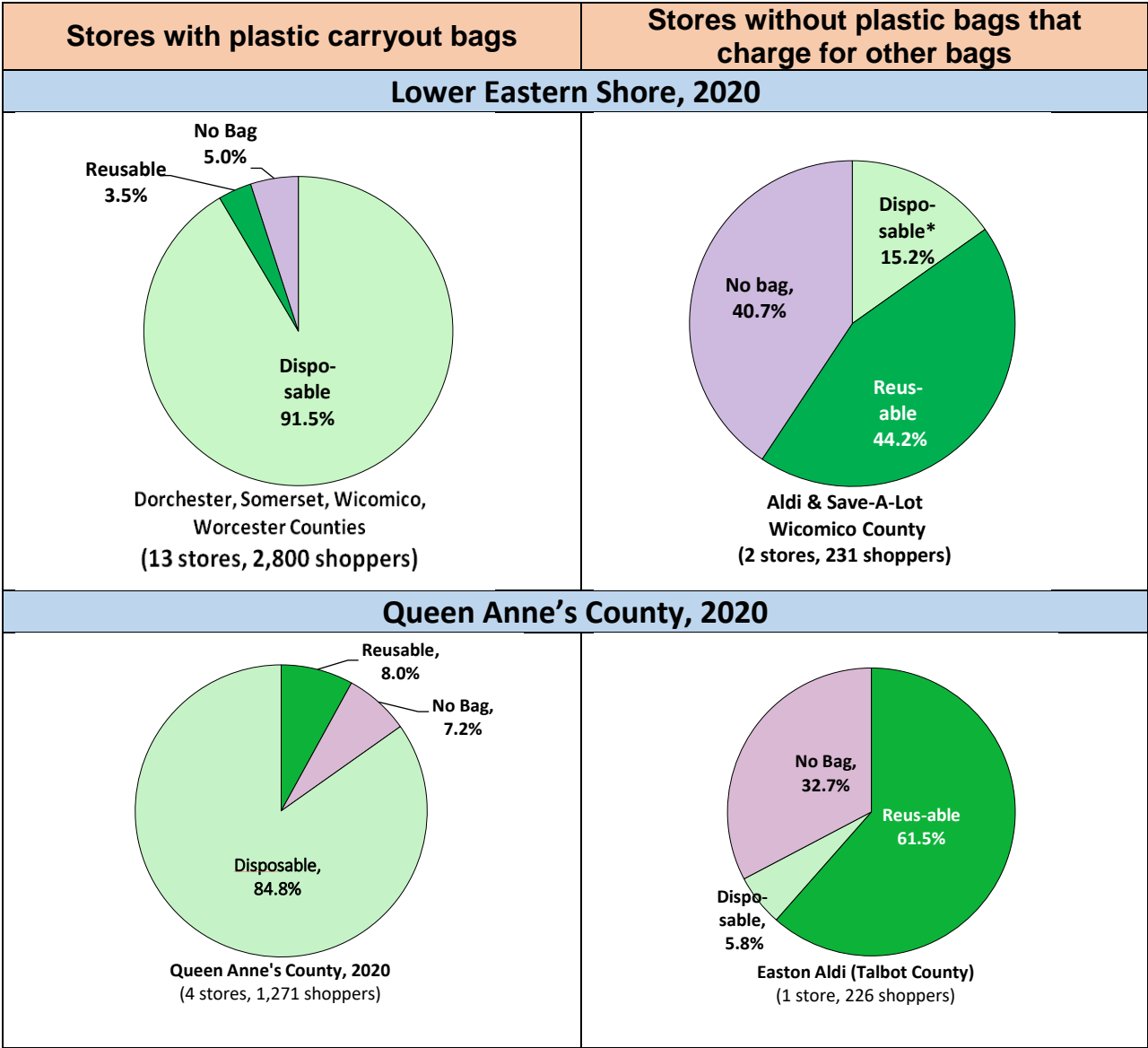


Exhibit 2. The cost of plastic bag contamination at Prince George's County's single-stream recycling facility

The Prince George's County Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Capitol Heights, Maryland, no longer attempts to recycle plastic bags because of their costly impact on the sorting machinery and the lack of a market for the highly contaminated product collected in the single-stream process. However, residents continue to put plastic bags in their curbside bins, and plastic bags and film continue to foul the equipment. The plastic bags that are captured at the MRF are landfilled.

How much is this costing Prince George's County? Every day after the last shift, three workers spend 8 hours each cleaning plastic film from the sorting screens. The photos below show the impact on the sorting equipment as of the end of a shift (left) and the equipment after it is cleaned (right). At \$20/hour, five days a week, 52 weeks per year, the cost to the facility of cleaning plastic bags from the equipment is at least \$124,800 annually because of plastic bag and film contamination.

Plastic film fouling at the end of the day



The screens after cleaning

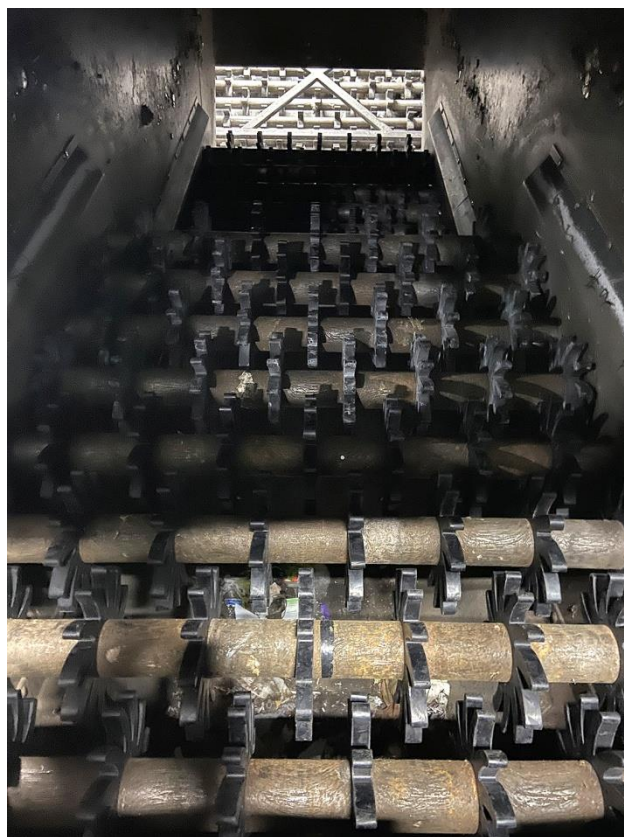
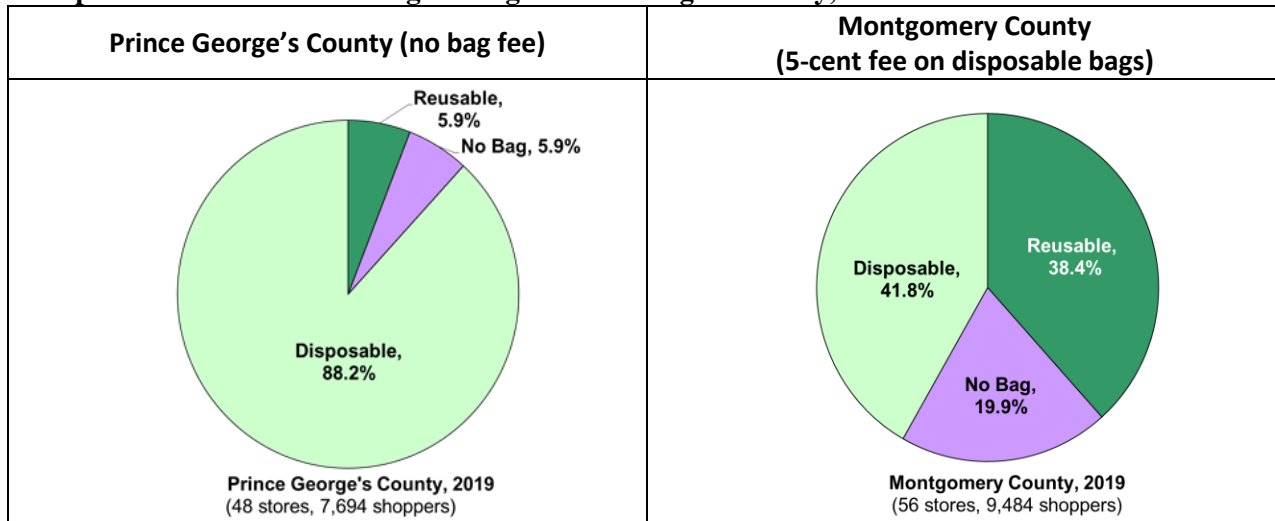


Exhibit 3. Bag fees in Howard and Montgomery Counties incentivize shoppers to use reusable bags or no bag

Montgomery County has had a 5-cent fee on plastic and paper carryout bags since 2012. Seven years later, there was still a strong incentive for shoppers to bring a reusable bag or no bag, compared with neighboring Prince George's County, with no bag fee (Figure 1). Howard County's 5-cent fee on plastic carryout bags went into effect on October 1, 2020. The share of shoppers using reusable bags or no bag in four grocery chains (Food Lion, Giant, Harris Teeter, Safeway) has increased from a quarter to half, and the share using plastic has declined from three-quarters to about a third (Figure 2).

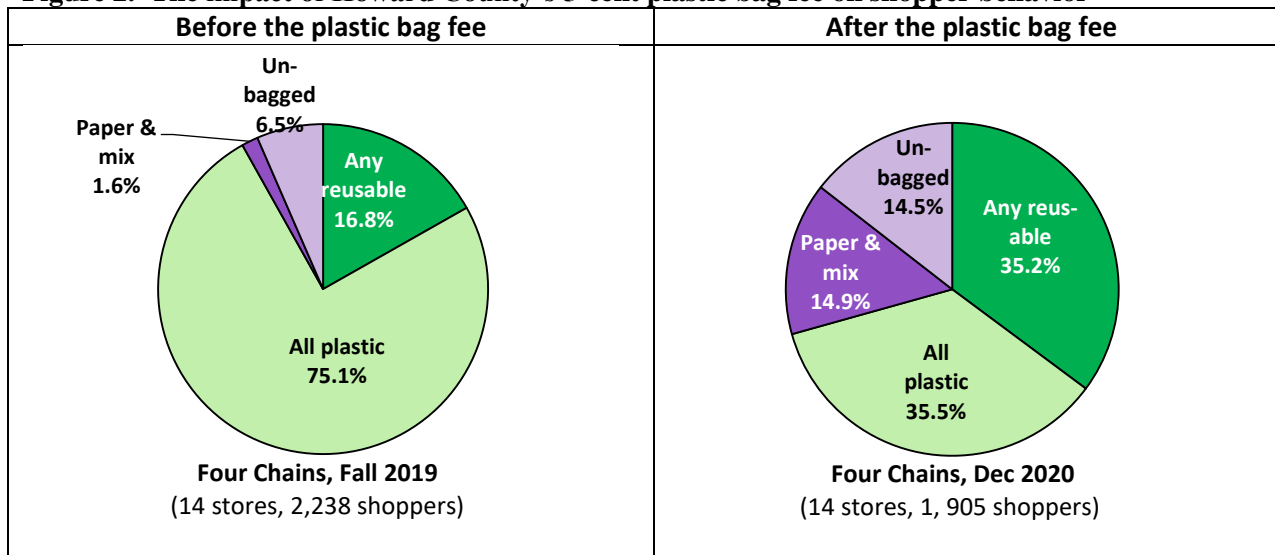
Figure 1. Shopper behavior in Montgomery County, with a 5-cent fee on paper and plastic carryout bags, compared with behavior in neighboring Prince George's County, with no fee



Note: Percent of shoppers using different bag types. "Disposable"= Plastic and/or paper bags only.

Source: Maryland Sierra Club Shopper Survey, 2019

Figure 2. The impact of Howard County's 5-cent plastic bag fee on shopper behavior



Note: The percent of shoppers using different bag types. "Paper & mix"= all paper bags or mix of paper and plastic bags. The same stores were surveyed in 2019 & 2020. Source: Maryland Sierra Club Shopper Surveys, 2019-2020

2021Audubon testimony FOR SB0223 - plastic bags Ja

Uploaded by: Wilson, David

Position: FAV



State Office
Patterson Park Audubon Center
Important Bird Area Program
2901 East Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
Tel: 410-558-2473
md.audubon.org

January 26, 2021

The Maryland Senate Finance Committee

SB0223 Plastic Bag Ban

Position: Support

Microplastics, specifically from plastic bags, are notorious for killing sea turtles, whales, and seabirds. This bill is an excellent step forward in reducing the rapid decline of endangered Royal and Common terns and other iconic seabirds that define our coastal state.

For this reason, Audubon Maryland-DC asks you to vote SB0223 out of committee and onto the floor to keep Maryland beautiful and safe for wildlife. We are one of 22 state programs of the National Audubon Society with approximately 19,000 members in Maryland.

This bill will reduce waste. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, a plastic can persist in our environment and pollute our communities for generations. Each year, the average American uses more than 300 single-use disposable bags.

Un-recyclable, plastic bags end up buried in leaky landfills or burned in incinerators. If they get loose they end up littering our neighborhoods, roads, and waterways. It takes more than 500 years for a plastic bag to degrade. The bags don't break down completely but instead photo-degrade, becoming microplastics that regularly kill sea turtles and seabirds that mistake them for food.

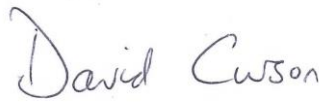
Scientists have found plastic fragments in hundreds of species, including 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all seabird species, and 43% of all marine mammal species. Most victims die from starvation from intestinal blockage.

Still, opposition from the bill comes almost solely from manufacturers of plastic, supermarket chains, and the petrochemical industry. Across the country, plastic bag bans have passed in over 350 cities and other communities. Passing this out of committee just makes sense for a state so reliant on its beaches and bays.

Audubon Maryland-DC respectfully requests a favorable report on SB0223.

Sincerely,

David Curson, PhD

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David Curson". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Maryland-DC

Takoma Park - SB 223 FWA - Plastic Bag Reduction A

Uploaded by: Ludlow, Suzanne

Position: FWA



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

SB 223 Support With Amendments

January 28, 2021

Senate – Finance Committee

SB 223: Plastic Bag Reduction Act

City Contact: Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager

SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov, 301-891-7229

The City of Takoma Park supports with amendments the Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

The City of Takoma Park has prohibited most single-use plastic bags for a number of years as part of our efforts to reduce pollution and limit the creation and proliferation of plastics. We work with our businesses and farmers markets to help them find alternative bags for their use. The items for which single-use plastic bags may be used in Takoma Park are nearly identical to those included in SB 223, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act, and so the major purpose of this Act is consistent with policy of the City of Takoma Park to limit plastic bags in the environment.

However, there are two points which the City believes should be addressed through amendment:

- The preemption of municipal or other local government law in SB 223 is unfortunate, and we ask to have this preemption language removed. Provided the terms of a municipal law are at least as restrictive as a State law, the municipality should be able to craft law that best meets the needs of the particular community, as adopted by their elected representatives and as authorized under the State Constitution.
- The enforcement authority of the proposed Plastic Bag Reduction Act is unclear. One provision of the Act is to allow a unit of County government to grant up to two temporary waivers of the provision to a retail establishment. This seems to imply that a County government would be responsible for enforcing the State law within municipalities. Enforcement authority should be clarified in the text of the Act.

A world without single-use plastic bags is a better world and this Act will help Maryland do its part. **The City of Takoma Park urges favorable consideration, with amendments regarding preemption and enforcement, of SB 223.**

Maryland SB223 Finance Hearing 01-28-21.pdf

Uploaded by: Young, Scott

Position: FWA



Maryland Senate Finance Committee
Sen. Delores G. Kelly, Chair
Sen. Brian J. Feldman, Vice-Chair
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

Dear Senators,

We work with veterinary clinics in Maryland, including Banfield Pet Hospitals, which are located inside of PetSmart retail stores. We would like to make one suggestion to the exemptions included in [SB223](#), the Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

The bill includes an exemption for “plastic bags provided by a pharmacist that contains prescription drugs.” There are other practitioners that operate inside of retail locations who provide prescription drugs, including veterinarians. We would recommend simplifying that exemption to include any bag that contains prescription drugs, regardless of who provides it. Our suggested language follows.

Article – Business Regulation
25 19–106

(A) (III) “plastic carryout bag” does not include: 2. A plastic bag ~~provided by a pharmacist~~ that contains prescription drugs;

We also represent PetSmart, and we support the other exemptions as they will cover our products of concern including insects, fish, aquatic plants, and dog waste bags.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us if there are any questions. We appreciate the committee’s time and effort and stay safe.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Young", is written over a light gray background.

Scott Young
Director, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs

(202) 744-5190

scott@animalpolicygroup.com

Bag ban written testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: locklair, cailey

Position: UNF

MARYLAND RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

The Voice of Retailing in Maryland



SB223/HB314 Plastic Bag Reduction Act
Senate Finance and House Environment and Transportation Committees
Position: OPPOSE
January 28, 2021

1. The Maryland Retailers Association is unable to support a ban on plastic bags without a statewide price floor for paper bags. Not only does this incentivize consumers to bring in their own recyclable bags because they do not want to pay for paper, but it helps retailers with the ever increasing cost of paper bags. As we had warned last year, a paper bag shortage would occur with the large amount of states and jurisdictions with plastic bag bans in effect or coming online.

With New York going online in October of 2020 estimates are that if 15 percent of single-use plastic bag users switched to reusable totes, the remaining demand for paper bags would be nearly 3.4 billion units. On the other side, if 90% of users switched to reusable totes, the demand for paper bags would still be 738 million units.

Numerous states and localities have had to re allow plastic bag usage or delay bans due to bag shortages- including Baltimore City. As we discussed at length last year, the cost of paper bags varies for retailers, but at a minimum quadruples their cost from plastic to paper. That is why a floor was set in last year's bill of 10 cents to help cover the cost for as many retailers as possible. Cost has only increased with the shortage and it is important to understand that MOST retailers pay between 34 cents to over a dollar for paper shopper bags depending on volume.

2. Additionally, health concerns from both employees and consumers have been heard loud and clear with regard to reusable bags. Most store employees will not handle reusable bags in the current climate either due to store policies or their own health concerns. Grocery unions publicly asked for temporary returns to plastic during the pandemic as well. Consumers have also been vocal to stores about not even wanting someone else's reusable bag on the same surface their items touch.

It is with these concerns we urge an unfavorable report.



171 CONDUIT STREET, ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401 | 410-269-1440

WWW.MDRA.ORG

NFIB - Plastic Bag Reduction Act - SB223 (2021).pd

Uploaded by: O'Halloran, Mike

Position: UNF



NFIB-Maryland – 60 West St., Suite 101 – Annapolis, MD 21401 – www.NFIB.com/Maryland

TO: Senate Finance Committee

FROM: NFIB – Maryland

DATE: January 26, 2021

RE: **OPPOSE SENATE BILL 223** – Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Founded in 1943, NFIB is the voice of small business, advocating on behalf of America's small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. With more than 250,000 members nationwide, and nearly 4,000 here in Maryland, we work to protect and promote the ability of our members to grow and operate their business.

On behalf of Maryland's small businesses, NFIB-Maryland opposes Senate Bill 223 – legislation that would prohibit a store from providing a customer with a "plastic carryout bag."

Within recent years, scores of retailers nationwide and throughout Maryland have instituted their own reusable bag programs without the interference of government mandates. These programs have proven wildly successful in terms of reducing single use bag consumption and have encouraged consumers to bring their own reusable bags.

At the same time plastic bags provide a more affordable option for small retailers allowing them to keep costs down at the checkout counter. These plastic bags are not only less expensive for employers but can be recyclable as well.

For these reasons **NFIB opposes SB223** and requests an unfavorable committee report.

ARPBA Maryland Testimony 012821 SB 223.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor, Zachary

Position: UNF

January 28, 2021

Maryland Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

RE: Opposition to SB 223

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the American Recyclable Plastic Bag Alliance (ARPBA), which represents America's plastic bag manufacturers and recyclers, I write to highlight concerns regarding SB 223 – legislation that would ban traditional plastic bags statewide and risk costly burdens for small businesses and consumers at a time when they can least afford it.

Importantly, I want to underscore that ARPBA shares a commitment to improve sustainability in Maryland. For our members, sustainability is at the forefront of everything we do, which is a key reason our members are pioneers in the plastic film recycling field and committed to meeting standards for recycled content in their products.

However, we are concerned that SB 223 would place significant burdens on businesses at a time of ongoing economic uncertainty. With a well-documented nationwide shortage of both paper and reusable bags, there is a risk that a plastic bag ban in Maryland would exacerbate operating costs for restaurants, retail stores, and grocery stores at a time when many businesses – both large and small – are struggling to stay afloat. Further, implementing the ban and the unfunded mandate could represent a hurdle to a strong economic recovery as we emerge from the pandemic.

These facts have led many states and localities across the country to rethink their plastic bag policies. Notably, the City of Baltimore has delayed its plastic bag ban for six months. Mayor Brandon Scott said, “At a time when people are hurting — both our residents who are out of work and local businesses — it’s just simply not responsible to implement this right now.” In addition, Westminster delayed implementation of its plastic bag ban, citing the hardships businesses are facing while noting concerns about reusable bags. Beyond these local developments, Maine, Washington, Philadelphia, and numerous other localities around the country have delayed implementation of their plastic bag policies for many of the same reasons.

Retail and grocery workers – who became frontline employees almost overnight – have repeatedly raised concerns with their employers about the bags that SB 223 intends to promote as a preferred alternative. The reasons behind these concerns and the reactions are straightforward. [Study](#) after [study](#) has shown that reusable bags can harbor bacteria and viruses that neither frontline workers nor consumers want to be exposed to, especially during a health crisis like COVID-19.

Although no studies have been done on COVID-19 transmission through reusable bags, it is clear consumers and frontline workers, as well as policymakers, appreciate the certainty that plastic retail bags provide in the current environment. The science supports their concerns about reusable bags, as a [study from the New England Journal of Medicine found](#) that the virus responsible for COVID-19 can remain viable for up to three days on polypropylene, the material most reusable bags are made from. As we continue our fight against the pandemic, small businesses and consumers deserve the flexibility and opportunity to choose the products that best meet their needs.

Overall, as this committee deliberates policy approaches to promote sustainability in Maryland, ARPBA stands ready to serve as a resource. We encourage you to review the data and considerations outlined below, which seek to underscore the unintended consequences plastic bag bans can create for communities and consumers, without clear benefits for the environment or sustainable practices.

Given the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 public health crisis and its negative economic repercussions, ARPBA urges the Maryland to reconsider a ban on these products, consider some of the additional information that follows below, and evaluate alternative approaches to achieve Maryland's sustainability objectives. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Plastic retail bags support American workers, including many right here in Maryland. Banning them will reward overseas manufacturers in some of the worst-polluting countries in the world. The vast majority of conventional plastic retail bags are manufactured domestically, supporting thousands of manufacturing jobs. In fact, there are 160 employees at a facility in Howard County manufacturing the plastic bags that SB 223 will ban. And as previously noted, U.S. plastic bag manufacturers are also major recyclers of plastic bags and films: in 2018, 75% of plastic bags and film returned for recycling at U.S. retail stores [were reclaimed](#) by U.S. and Canadian recyclers.

However, the vast majority of reusable totes, such as the kind commonly available for \$1-2 at the grocery store checkout counter, are made by foreign manufacturers in countries that are responsible for much of the world's marine debris, primarily China and Vietnam.

Bans on plastic bags create significant burdens for small businesses and consumers.

Implementing a ban on plastic bags is costly for retailers, especially small businesses and grocery stores who operate on razor-thin profit margins. For example, when San Francisco implemented its plastic bag ban in 2012, large grocery stores reported \$80,000 per year in extra costs.

More recently in 2019, large grocery stores in Maryland reported more than \$200,000 per year in increased costs for each store when a plastic bag ban is implemented. Due to [broad bag shortages](#), particularly for paper bags, that are expected to [last for several years](#) these costs have likely increased.

The financial burden from the ban would fall most heavily on small businesses who will be forced to spend a great deal of money attempting to purchase bags in bulk at costs reflecting increased demands. Inevitably, these costs will be passed onto consumers in the form of higher prices or consumers will face significant inconvenience in the event that retailers cannot acquire bags to offer.

Plastic retail bags make up a tiny percentage of both municipal solid waste and litter. Banning them will not have a meaningful impact on either category.

Many suggest plastic retail bags are filling up landfills and the environment, but this simply isn't true. [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data](#) shows that all plastic "bags and sacks" combined make up 0.3% of the nation's municipal solid waste. Plastic retail bags account for an even smaller fraction of waste, despite common misperceptions about their prevalence in waste streams or elsewhere.

Additionally, two recent statewide litter studies, done in nearby [New Jersey](#) and [Pennsylvania](#), found that branded plastic retail bags make up very small percentages of litter in each state: 0.8% and 0.7%, respectively. In addition, [2020 Ocean Conservancy data](#) found that plastic grocery bags make up only 1% of beach cleanup material in Maryland. Make no mistake: this number should be zero. Plastic bags do not belong in the environment and should always be disposed of properly, either through reuse or recycling at supermarket drop-off bins.

Plastic retail bags are reused at high rates. Banning them means that people will need to buy products that use more plastic and have a greater carbon footprint.

According to [Recyc- Québec](#), a government recycling agency based in Canada, nearly 78% of people reuse their “single-use” plastic bags, most often as a small trash can liner or to pick up pet waste. In other words, “single-use” is a misnomer.

Ironically, research from the [University of Sydney](#) found that after California’s plastic bag ban, the sales of thicker, more resource-intensive plastic trash bags skyrocketed. Once plastic bags were banned, Californians started buying trash bags for their everyday use instead of reusing the shopping bags that they previously relied on.

The same study found that California’s plastic bag ban led to an increase in carbon emissions—one of the strongest indicators that these policies have unintended consequences and do not always have a positive environmental outcome once everything is accounted for. Policies designed to promote sustainability should promote more sustainable behaviors or products, not drive consumers to less sustainable choices.

Recycling is a key priority for plastic retail bag manufacturers, and it is working.

At many grocery stores and major retail chains, you will find a bin for recycling plastic bags and other types of plastic wraps and films. Our members – the companies who make plastic bags – established early on that they did not want to see their products going directly to the landfill after one use, so they invented a way to recycle plastic bags.

After plastic bags are returned to grocery and retail stores, ARPBA members and other companies buy those plastic bags back from the retailer (along with other polyethylene wraps and films) and transport them to recycling facilities where they are eventually turned into new bags, railroad ties, composite lumber, asphalt, and much more. Today, ARPBA members are not only in the manufacturing business but also in the recycling business, recycling hundreds of millions of pounds of plastic bags and film each year.

Recycling plastic bags and film is a core part of our business – and it works. While we often hear that recycling is ineffective because China and other countries stopped taking our waste and recycling, this doesn’t apply to plastic bags and film. In 2018, 75% of plastic bags and film returned for recycling at U.S. retail stores [were reclaimed](#) by U.S. and Canadian recyclers.

Plastic retail bags are the most sustainable option at the checkout counter – as long as they are disposed of properly.

Life cycle assessment after life cycle assessment of carryout bags has found that plastic is the best option at the checkout counter, in terms of sustainability and resource efficiency. For example, [Recyc-Québec](#) released a study in December 2017, which found that the overall lifecycle of the plastic bag—from its production to the end of its life—has far less environmental impact compared with other bags. Additionally, in a February 2018 study, [Denmark’s Environmental Protection Agency](#) concluded that lightweight plastic carrier bags provide “the absolute best environmental performance.”

With America still dealing with the pandemic and retailers and consumers reeling, policymakers should focus on legislation that reduces costs and burdens for businesses – not new regulations that make doing business in Maryland more complicated and expensive during an ongoing global health crisis.

To conclude, we would welcome the opportunity to provide more details about this issue, discuss potential policy solutions, and do our part to help Maryland achieve its sustainability goals. ARPBA and its members stand ready to work with you on solutions that protect the state’s unique environment, increase recycling,

decrease litter and waste, and reduce marine debris without placing a burden on residents or the business community or moving manufacturing jobs overseas.

As you work through this process, please consider us a resource, and don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zachary Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Zachary Taylor
Director
American Recyclable Plastic Bag Alliance

CC: Sen. Malcolm L. Augustine
Sen. Pamela G. Beidle
Sen. Joanne C. Benson
Sen. Antonio L. Hayes
Sen. Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
Sen. J. B. Jennings
Sen. Katherine A. Klausmeier
Sen. Benjamin F. Kramer
Sen. Justin D. Ready

SB0223_MDE_LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: abbott, tyler

Position: INFO



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

January 28, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 223 - Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed Senate Bill 223, entitled *Plastic Bag Reduction Act*. We support the concept of reducing plastic waste and litter and would like to provide additional information regarding the bill.

Beginning July 1, 2022, the bill would prohibit a retail establishment from providing a plastic carryout bag, defined to include a plastic bag less than 4 mils thick, to a customer at the point of sale. A unit of county government would be responsible for enforcing the proposed legislation. The Maryland Department of Labor would be required to adopt regulations to implement the proposed legislation. Additionally, beginning July 1, 2022, the bill would preempt and supersede any municipal or county law or ordinance that prohibits, restricts, or regulates a retail establishment's use of plastic bags less than 4 mils thick. However, this preemption would not affect the authority of the county or municipality to charge and collect a fee, tax, or other charge for the use of carryout bags at the point of sale that are not a plastic bag less than 4 mils thick if the law authorizing the fee, tax, or other charge for the use of carryout bags was enacted on or before February 1, 2021.

MDE's 2016 Statewide Waste Characterization Study found that clean film and clean shopping bags make up approximately 0.7 percent of the municipal solid waste being disposed of in Maryland by weight. While plastic carryout bags make up a small portion of the overall waste stream, they can pose litter and water quality problems. Plastic carryout bags are susceptible to littering because they are lightweight and they can make their way into storm drains and waterways, posing a risk of ingestion by marine and other wildlife. Maryland has established Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for trash in certain State waters.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor Senate Bill 223 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Malcolm Augustine
Kaley Laleker, Director, Land and Materials Administration