



Mission: To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy **Vision:** Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities

HB 307 – Environment – Packaging Materials – Producer Responsibility

Hearing Date: 2/2/2022

Committee: E&T

Position: SUPPORT

Chairperson Barve and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee: The Maryland Public Health Association would like to express support for HB 307, sponsored by Delegate Lierman. This bill will assist with reducing litter and waste in the state through a program aimed at packaging materials.

In 2019, the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) released a report detailing the harms to human health that plastics have throughout their lifecycle. From extraction of fossil fuels for the production of plastics, to consumer use, and through the waste stream, plastic has the potential to harm human health at every stage. Plastic is only one of many types of materials used in packaging, but much ends straight to landfills without consideration of recycling or sustainability.

Maryland's recycling laws are much as they were when enacted in 1988, with a few updates made along the way – setting up producer responsibility for batteries and electronics, for example. This bill gives us the opportunity to modernize recycling for packaging in the state, involve the expertise of manufacturers of packaging as to how best to do that, and financially support the counties for some of their costs related to recycling packaging.

Non-reusable packaging materials are a global problem with local solutions. Setting up a producer responsibility program is an appropriate and practical legislative action that can protect our environment, which in turn has positive impacts on human health, and can raise awareness among consumers.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge a favorable report on HB 307.

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdpHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdpHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.