



**Committee: Environment & Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB 307 - Environment - Packaging Materials - Producer Responsibility**

**Organization: WISE**

**Submitting: Monica O'Connor, Environment/Climate Legislative Liaison**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: January 26, 2022**

Dear Chairperson Barve and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. WISE is an all-volunteer women-led group of advocates formed in Anne Arundel County, and has over 600 members. WISE urges you to vote favorably on HB307.

We enthusiastically support HB 307. This bill sets up an incentivized system to reduce packaging, increase recycled content in packaging and increase the recyclability of packaging, all of which will ultimately reduce litter across the state.

Maryland's litter issues are so significant that the State, in 2010 and 2015, set up TMDL's, or water pollution limits, for litter in the Anacostia and Patapsco rivers. Those limits then triggered requirements for measures such as street sweeping to reduce litter entering waterways. We are not aware of any data showing meaningful reductions in litter generation other than product specific bans such as for polystyrene, plastic bags and single use plastics.

Setting up producer responsibility for packaging will reduce the amount of packaging littering our communities and waterways. It will also create incentives to increase the recycled content and recyclability of packaging – another step toward reducing litter.

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. The bill begins a transition from counties bearing the full financial cost of collection, sorting and resale of packaging to producers, who control the content and design of their products, being incentivized to reduce their packaging and increasing its recyclability.

Maryland has producer responsibility programs in place for a handful of products. Producer responsibility programs for packaging have long been in place in Canada and Europe. Maine and Oregon adopted packaging programs last year and a number of states are, like you, considering it this year. Industry trade editorials now often refer to producer responsibility as an idea whose time has come.

Marylanders take great pride in our recycling efforts and, in turn, we should modernize this system for packaging so we can increase our recycling and decrease litter. We respectfully urge your favorable consideration.