



Position: Supporting HB 284: Environment - Reducing Packaging Materials - Producer Responsibility Bill

Submitted to: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Submitted by: MOM's Organic Market

February 22, 2023

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

MOM's Organic Market is proud to say that ten of our twenty-two stores are located in Maryland, serving thousands of Marylanders daily. Our customers demonstrate their concern for the environment by using the many options we provide to reduce plastic and other packaging. We strongly support HB 284 Environment - Reducing Packaging Materials - Producer Responsibility Bill and respectfully ask for your favorable vote.

Currently, Maryland residents foot the bill to pay for handling and processing of the waste stream, twenty-eight percent (28%) of which is packaging, and an estimated forty percent (40%) of this is plastic. This is a burden that should not be on the taxpayer and government. The Producer Responsibility Bill will shift the commitment to the packaging manufacturers and make them responsible for it at each stage of the packages' lifecycle. Without this, too much ends up as waste, and much of it ultimately ends up in our environment, polluting waterways and creating biological hazards as it breaks down into smaller components. A benefit to the bill is that revenues created by the oversight go to counties to support recycling efforts.

Maryland must take this opportunity to protect its residents and our environment from this hazard. The first crucial step is for this Environment & Transportation Committee to pass HB 284.

MOM's Purpose is *to protect and restore the environment*. Since 2005, we have banned plastic bags and encouraged reusable bags in our stores. Our customers embrace this and reuse bags to the tune of 3.3 million single-use bags avoided in 2022 alone. In 2010, with our Plastic Surgery campaign, we also banned plastic bottled water, began to use compostable produce bags and switched to compostable cups and utensils in all our stores. But this only addresses a small portion of the challenge of packaging. Without government regulation, manufacturers have no incentive to take responsibility for the waste created by packaging. HB 284 will begin to address this.

In addition to advocating for packaging and waste reduction, we consider it our responsibility to educate our customers about these environmental issues. This is an issue the public has

become well aware of because they see it every day in their streets, streams, and at home. Individual action alone will not address this issue of packaging waste, which contributes to climate change, and manufacturers won't act aggressively without laws and regulations to hold them accountable.

We respectfully request a favorable report from you on HB 284.