



**Date:** February 22, 2023

**Bill:** HB 342 - Environment – Plastic Products – Postconsumer Recycled Content Program

**Position:** Support

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Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests your support for **House Bill 342: Environment – Plastic Products – Postconsumer Recycled Content Program**, which would establish standards for minimum post-consumer content of recycled material in certain plastic containers.

Stopping plastic pollution is one of the National Aquarium’s three strategic conservation goals. The plastic pollution crisis has been well-documented as global plastic production has outpaced any other manufactured material, with a substantial portion of plastics manufactured used for packaging; and more than half of all plastic ever made now accumulating in landfills or in the environment<sup>1</sup>. Plastic packaging makes up about 28% of our waste stream, and the U.S. is one of the world’s top generators of new plastic production and plastic waste.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the impacts that mismanaged plastic waste has on wildlife and human health, annual greenhouse gas emissions at every stage of the plastic lifecycle contribute to climate change. If plastic production and use grow as projected, related emissions by 2030 would be equivalent to nearly three hundred new coal-fired power plants.<sup>3</sup> We encourage policy solutions that can contribute to reduced demand for new plastic production. A requirement for post-consumer content in common goods will improve market demand for recycled material. More importantly, multiple studies have demonstrated that when compared to their virgin content counterparts, materials made with post-consumer recycled content have lower environmental impacts including reduced total energy demand, smog formation, and human and ecotoxicity.

Addressing the many harmful impacts of the plastic pollution crisis requires comprehensive systemic change. It is past time for Maryland to enact additional policies that support reduced production of and demand for plastic; encourage behavior change; clean up existing pollution; and provide for education and outreach. Setting minimum recycled content standards is one important policy tool as part of a comprehensive approach needed to address the growing plastic pollution crisis. **We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB342.**

Contact:

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<sup>1</sup> Geyer, R. et al. 2017. Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. *Science Advances* (3):7. DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.1700782

<sup>2</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. *Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26132>.

<sup>3</sup> Center for International Environmental Law 2019. *Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet*. [www.ciel.org/plasticandclimate](http://www.ciel.org/plasticandclimate)