



March 5, 2025

Legislative Position: Unfavorable

House Bill 1067

Local Government - Fee for Plastic and Paper Carryout Bags - Prohibition on Charge

House Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Chairman Korman and members of the committee:

Founded in 1969, the Howard Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to helping businesses—from sole proprietors to large international firms—grow and succeed. With the power of 700 members that encompass more than 170,000 employees, the Howard County Chamber is an effective partner with elected officials and advocates for the interests of the county's business community.

The Howard County Chamber of Commerce respectfully opposes House Bill 1067. While we understand the intent behind this legislation, we strongly believe that it will have unintended consequences that will negatively impact local retailers and create unequal treatment for certain customers.

Our primary concern is the fiscal impact on local retailers. By prohibiting retailers from charging a fee for plastic or paper carryout bags to customers using federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, retailers will be forced to absorb the costs of providing these bags. This will result in increased expenses for retailers, which may lead to higher prices for all customers or reduced services.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the impact of singling out shoppers who utilize federal assistance programs. The USDA has rules in place that prohibit retailers from discriminating against SNAP and WIC recipients. By exempting these customers from the bag fee, retailers may inadvertently create a separate and unequal shopping experience, which could be perceived as discriminatory.

Additionally, the USDA's rules also state that retailers may not provide any special treatment or benefits to SNAP and WIC recipients that are not available to all customers. By exempting these customers from the bag fee, retailers may be in violation of these rules, which could result in penalties and fines.

Again, while we understand the intent behind House Bill 1067, we strongly believe that it will have unintended consequences that will negatively impact local retailers and create unequal treatment for certain customers. For these reasons, the Howard County Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **unfavorable report** on **HB 1067**.

Sincerely,

Kristi Simon
President & CEO
Howard County Chamber of Commerce