



February 18, 2020

To: The Honorable Delegate Dereck Davis, Chair
Members, House Economic Matters Committee

From: Josh Young
Senior Director, State Affairs

RE: HB 296 – Oppose as amended

The American Chemistry Council (ACC) must respectfully oppose amendments to HB 296, ACC and industry partners urge the committee to **enact the bill as written** which requires straws to be provided only upon request which is in line with ACC's product stewardship position for straws.

ACC and its members take seriously the issue of litter and marine debris. To that end, ACC's Plastics Division recently announced a product stewardship position for straws¹. ACC developed its position as part of ongoing efforts to help promote the responsible use of valuable plastic materials and in accordance with our commitment to the Trash Free Seas Alliance®(TFSA)². The TSFA brings together thought leaders to work toward the immediate goal of reducing the amount of plastic waste entering the ocean annually by 50 percent by 2025.

ACC's position on straws is designed to help avoid wasteful use by recommending that straws not be provided unless customers ask for them. There are many circumstances in which the use of drinking straws will enhance safety, and promote sanitary conditions. However, there are also circumstances when a drinking straw is automatically provided in a drink before the consumer has asked for one. Adopting this type of voluntary policy will help prevent any unnecessary and potentially wasteful use, while ensuring that straws can still be distributed to those who need them.

ACC is working domestically and internationally with government officials, retailers, anti-litter groups and consumers to devise solutions to prevent litter and marine debris. Some of our other recent activities include helping develop new and innovative recycling programs nationwide; promoting industry-wide practices to contain plastic pellets; partnering with governments and conservationists to encourage recycling and discourage litter; working to educate children on the link between litter and marine health; working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to advance scientific understanding of marine debris; and continuing to innovate and develop smaller, lighter packaging. More information about our activities to help reduce marine debris can be found at:

<http://www.marinedebrissolutions.com/default.aspx>

Instead of banning plastics straws as proposed in the amendments to HB 296, we would instead encourage material suppliers, product makers, food/drink establishments and NGOs to work collaboratively to promote the responsible use of straws. Thank you in advance for considering our views. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-249-6223 or via email at Josh.Young@americanchemistry.com.

¹ <https://plastics.americanchemistry.com/fact-sheets-and-infographics/Product-Stewardship-for-Straws.pdf>

² <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/trash-free-seas-alliance/>

