



Bill: HB 296

Date: February 19, 2020

Position: Support

HB 296 - Environment - Single-Use Plastic Straws - Use in a Food Service Business

Dear Chairman Davis, Chairman Barve, and members of the Committees:

Trash Free Maryland is a nonprofit organization focused on lasting change to prevent trash pollution. We bring together organizations, businesses, government agencies and decision makers, and individuals committed to reducing trash in Maryland's environment.

Trash Free Maryland enthusiastically supports HB 296, which, as written, prohibits a restaurant from providing single-use plastic straws unless a customer requests them, with some exceptions. With Delegate Love's sponsor amendment, the bill would change to prohibit plastic straws generally, with some exceptions. Trash Free Maryland supports both the sponsor amended version of the bill, or the original bill language, but we prefer the amended version. We thank Delegate Love for both the original bill language, and the amendment.

The problem: According to the Trash Free Seas Alliance, the average American uses 1.6 straws a day. In the US alone, that's enough to circle the equator two and a half times. Plastic straws don't get recycled; they end up in landfills and incinerators, or littered in the environment where they do damage to our ecosystem. Many marine animals mistake these and other plastic items for food. Plastic has been found in an estimated 90% of all seabirds and in all sea turtle species. By 2050 it is projected that there will be more plastic in the world's oceans than fish, by weight.

The solution: People don't need to use plastic straws because there are so many alternatives. Paper straws are becoming more available, but there are also reusable straws made of materials like glass, metal, and bamboo. We can get rid of plastic straws in Maryland and remove one more type of toxic litter in our environment.

We urge a favorable report on HB 296. Thank you.

Contact:

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