



February 19, 2020
2020 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL: HB 0296, Single-Use Plastic Straws - Use in a Food Service Business
COMMITTEE: Economic Matters; Environment and Transportation
POSITION: Testimony in Support of House Bill 0296
BILL ANALYSIS: Prohibiting, beginning January 1, 2021, a food service business from providing a single-use plastic straw to a customer dining in the food service business unless the customer requests a straw; and applying the Act.

Dear Chair Davis, Vice Chair Dumais, and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill as it seeks to reduce the environmental impact of our food service industry by eliminating single use plastic straws, and encouraging more sustainable, alternative types of food serviceware.

HB0296 will encourage Maryland food businesses to explore greener food serviceware options, effectively seeking to reduce the amount of plastic entering our waste streams and increase the use of compostable, reusable, and recyclable materials, to move us closer to our Zero-Waste goals. This bill will build upon the State's ongoing efforts to enhance sustainability in the food service industry, as evidenced by the passing of HB0109/SB0285, Expanded Polystyrene Food Service Products Prohibition, in 2019. Multiple jurisdictions have already had success with implementing legislation to ban single-use plastic straws; Washington D.C. began enforcing a ban on single-use plastic straws and stirrers in January of 2019, and Prince George's County introduced a plastic straw ban in November of 2019. In both cases, exemptions have been made to allow single-use plastic straws to be provided to individuals with disabilities, and we encourage the State to incorporate such a provision into HB0296.

Reducing the footprint of our food service industry is essential to meeting waste reduction requirements throughout the State, while protecting our ecosystem and environment, and HB0296 will continue to move us in this direction. **For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports HB0296 and urges you to vote FOR this bill.**

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Our mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system. Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant food system in Montgomery County that consciously produces, distributes, and recycles food, making it accessible to all residents while promoting the health of the local food economy, its consumers, and the environment.

For more information, please contact: Heather Bruskin, MCFC Executive Director, at the email and phone number below.

