



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

HB 296

DATE: February 19, 2020

SPONSOR: Delegate Love, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Economic Matters and Environment and Transportation

CONTACT PERSON: Amy Samman (amy.samman@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Environment – Single-Use Plastic Straws – Use in a Food Service Business

House Bill 296 prohibits food service businesses in the State from providing single-use plastic straws to customers dining in the food service business, unless it is requested by the customer beginning January 1, 2021.

In 2015, Montgomery County enacted a ban on certain disposable food service ware which includes plastic straws. “A food service business selling or providing food or beverages for consumption on or off premises in disposable food service ware must use compostable or recyclable disposable food service ware unless the Executive determines that there is no suitable affordable compostable or recyclable product available.” Montgomery County Code § 48-54(c).

Montgomery County supports a prohibition on single use plastic straws. It will reduce the amount of litter in our watersheds and decrease the potential for harm to aquatic life that may ingest it. A prohibition will also encourage the use of other recyclable and compostable alternatives. However, Montgomery County would like to continue the County’s program in its current form which bans plastic straws and requires the use of compostable or recyclable disposable food service ware.

It is our understanding that the bill sponsor has requested amendments that would strike the exemptions for: (1) beverages at a drive-through window; (2) prepackaged beverages available at food service businesses; and (3) beverages that customers serve themselves at a food service business. The sponsor’s proposed amendments would also create an exemption for any instances where it would interfere with accommodation of any individual’s physical or medical needs.

Montgomery County supports House Bill 296 with amendments striking the exemptions currently listed in the bill and adding an exemption to accommodate an individual’s physical or medical needs.