



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 296

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

CBF POSITION: **SUPPORT**

To: Economic Matters Committee

Date: February 19, 2020

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) SUPPORTS HB 296. This bill would prohibit a food service business from providing a single-use plastic straw to a customer, unless the customer has a disability.

HB 296 will help change behavioral norms and expectations by ending the general distribution single-use plastic straws.

Between 170 and 500 million straws a day are used in the United States. According to the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup report, plastic straws rank number five in the "Top 10 Items Collected" found at beach cleanups. It may seem like a small percentage compared to the total but that adds up when used by millions of people use them daily. Plastic straws are just one part of the bigger issue of plastic pollution.

Increasing evidence also suggests that plastics in the environment accumulate as "microplastics" that can be found in the Bay and its waterways, mimicking the natural food of marine life. If consumed by crabs and juvenile fish these particles prevent digestion and buoyancy, leading to death.

Microplastics can also cause an imbalance in the food chain in Chesapeake Bay, disrupting the primary food source for many marine animals. This can negatively impact the food and habitat of multiple layers of marine life.

By reducing one source of plastic pollution, this legislation may contribute to a cleaner and healthier Bay.

For these reasons, CBF SUPPORTS HB 296 and urges a FAVORABLE report. For more information, please contact Carmera Thomas, Baltimore Program Manager at 443.482.2011 or carmerathomas@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 107,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.