



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

HB 209

Support with Amendments

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 2020

HB 209: Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

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The City of Takoma Parks supports, with amendments to protect its existing program, the Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act. The manufacture and use of single use plastic bags have an adverse impact on the environment, choking waterways, contributing to unsightly litter, adding to solid waste disposal challenges, and producing chemical byproducts from manufacture. Imposing a ban can promote the use of more sustainable alternatives for a healthier community.

This bill would prohibit a store from distributing plastic carryout bags to a customer at the point of sale; require a store to charge and collect at least 10 cents for each durable carryout bag the store provides to a customer; and establish a Single-Use Products Workgroup.

Takoma Park has had a successful ban on use of single-use plastic bags at point of sale since 2016 and has been at the forefront of other environmental issues that preceded state action, such as bans on cosmetic pesticides, polystyrene, plastic straws, as well as policies concerning recycling and composting. The City seeks amendments to the current bill that would:

- 1) Grant a municipality that has a plastic bag **ban** in effect at the time of the statewide law going into effect the authority to enforce the new state bag ban law. (Otherwise the City cedes authority to the County)
 - a. In the event that counties are granted a portion of the fee on other bags, allow a municipality that meets the qualifications of #1 to also retain a portion of the fee.
- 2) Add clarifying language that a local jurisdiction with taxing authority maintains their authority to pass a bag ban law that is more stringent than the state law in the future.

We ask for this amendment so that the City of Takoma Park can maintain its authority and continue to be an incubator for ideas and policies that will protect the environment.

Justice Brandeis wrote: “It is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country.” We believe the same holds true for municipalities. The City of Takoma Park can be and has been a laboratory for the state of Maryland. We ask that you will consider our amendments and let us continue to serve in this role.

In sum, the City of Takoma Park urges favorable consideration of this bill, with amendments.