



4FRONT

STUDENTS TAKING ACTION FOR CHANGE

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 209 - Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

Judiciary Committee

Environment and Transportation

February 11, 2020

SUPPORT

Our names are Allie Cohen, Ella Friner, Hannah Getz, Jenna Lubliner, Sophie Polakoff, and Wyatt Sherman and we're members of a group called STAC, which stands for Students Taking Action for a Change. Housed by 4Front, Baltimore's hub for Jewish teen programming, STAC is a political advocacy program for Jewish teens in the greater Baltimore area. It allows teens like ourselves to gain a better understanding of the political process and gain real life advocacy experience all through a Jewish lens.

We are writing to express our support of House Bill 209 –The Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act, a piece of legislature that would ban retailers from distributing plastic bags. Additionally, it would require stores to charge 10 cents for paper bags being used by customers.

In Maryland, people carelessly throw away tons of plastic every day. Since plastic bags are virtually non-recyclable and non-biodegradable, they wind up littering the environment and can be consumed by harmless animals. Consequently, plastic grocery bags are the seventh most common items collected from the Ocean's Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup, resulting in the death of over 100,000 marine animals. Furthermore, plastics contain toxic chemicals, such as carcinogens, neurotoxins, and endocrine disruptors. These harmful chemicals kill wildlife and are even ingested by people. In fact, it is estimated that people consume a credit card worth of plastic every week. Moreover, the plastic contributes to the global climate crisis. About 99% of plastic is made from fossil fuels. In addition, The World Economic Forum predicts that plastic production will double within the next 20 years. As we have stated, plastic is not only affecting animals and humans, but also the environment.

One reason that we care about this issue is because as young Jewish adults, we're taught not to waste the resources that God gave us. As stated in Genesis, 2:15, we are taught that human beings are placed on earth to protect and care for the natural world. Due to the non-stop usage of plastic bags, we are betraying God by not following this teaching. As Jews, we believe it's our job to keep the world as natural as possible. If we continue with this constant use of plastic bags, eventually we will have a harder time to reverse what harm has already happened to our planet.

Personally, every time our family's go to the grocery store, we bring our own reusable bags. By doing so, we're making a small, trivial change in our lives to make a greater change on the world. While paper bags leave less of a mark on the environment, we believe that the 10-cent charge for paper will lead to more people bringing their own reusable bags to the store.

As young people in this world who care about the environment, we are asking that you support House Bill 209, as it will lead our world to a cleaner, healthier environment. The longer we wait to make these changes, the worse these problems get. Thus, changes need to be made immediately, starting with the passage of House Bill 209.