



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education

## House Bill 209

### Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

DATE: FEBRUARY 11, 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

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**The Chesapeake Bay Foundation requests a favorable report on HB 209 Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act from the Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters Committees.** This bill seeks to reduce plastic pollution by prohibiting retailers from distributing plastic bags to customers at the point of sale and imposing a ten-cent price for paper bags provided to customers.

Nearly two million single-use plastic bags are distributed worldwide every minute. Many of these bags become litter that degrades residential communities and pollutes natural environments. The Chesapeake Bay is a landing point for plastics pollution. Plastics pollution harms shorelines and water habitats and threatens aquatic life. As plastic pollution breaks down, it forms microplastics. These microplastics create an imbalance in the food chain in Chesapeake Bay, disrupting the primary food source for many marine animals.<sup>1</sup>

This legislation attempts to reduce plastic pollution at the source through reducing the number of plastic bags introduced in Maryland. The prohibition on plastic bags and price on paper alternatives intends to encourage customers to adopt the habit of re-usable bags. The bill's requirements and incentives may help reduce plastics pollution. If successful, HB 209 may lessen the plastic debris entering local rivers and streams and protect the Chesapeake Bay from pollution from its tributaries.

**For these reasons, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation urges a favorable report on HB 209.** Please contact Carmera Thomas-Wilhite, Baltimore Program Manager, at [carmerathomas@cbf.org](mailto:carmerathomas@cbf.org) with any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Cole, M. (2015). The Impact of Polystyrene Microplastics on Feeding, Function and Fecundity in the Marine Copepod *Calanus helgolandicus*. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 49, 2, 1130-1137. <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/es504525u>.

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