

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 209
February 11, 2020 * ENT & ECM Committees

Chairmen Barve & Davis & Members of the Committees:

My name is Niamh McQuillan. I am a 35-year resident of Baltimore County and a 22-year employee of Baltimore County Public Schools. I am a life-long advocate for the environment. I am affiliated with 350.org Baltimore, Climate Reality Project Baltimore, Baltimore Blue+Green+Just and the Project Drawdown/Pachamama Alliance. I also work with Chief Sustainability Officer Steve Lafferty and his Youth Climate group.

I strongly support HB 209 HBO209 - Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act. Here are the reasons why:

1. There are 8.3 billion tons of plastic in the world. 91% of plastic isn't recycled. By 2050 it is estimated that the weight of plastic in the ocean will equal the weight of animals in the ocean. Over the last ten years we have produced more plastic than during the whole of the last century.
2. 50% is single-use plastic. Over 500 billion plastic bags are used world-wide. One million plastic bags are used every minute. 100.7 billion plastic beverage bottles were sold in the U.S. in 2014, or 315 bottles per person. 40 Billion plastic utensils are used each year in the US.
3. Plastic used by households has reached such quantities it will show up in the fossil record, scientists have warned. Microbeads, fibers and fragments from water bottles take so long to break down they are becoming 'technofossils'. It means plastics, developed relatively recently in the 1900s but now widespread in the sea, could form their own layer in the sedimentary rock used to chart the history of the planet.
4. Plastic break down into microplastics that infiltrate oceans and land and in turn the food we eat.
5. Our world is literally drowning in plastic.

Please take the vital step today to ensure the health of our citizens and our planet, and vote in favor of banning plastic and requiring stores to charge a minimum of 10 cents for paper bags and all reusable bags. This is one small step that can make a huge difference. Many countries have successfully instituted a similar ban. Maryland can do the same.

Sincerely,

Niamh McQuillan