

**HB0209 - Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act - Environment and
Transportation and Economic Matters
February 11th, 2020
Position: Favorable**

Chairmen Barve & Davis & Members of the Committees:

We are in a plastic pollution crisis. Every minute of every day a garbage truck of plastic is dumped into our oceans. If we carry on as usual, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050. By 2050, this could mean there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans. The system needs to change.

HB209 The Plastic and Packaging Act will help reduce plastic pollution, plastic's harmful side effects and, as importantly, this bill will also help change our "throwaway" mentality.

2 million single-use plastic bags are consumed every minute. These bags often wind up in waterways and our landscape, degrading water and soil as they break down into tiny toxic bits. These bags have a massive carbon footprint.

Beginning on New Year's Day, Mom's Organic Market, with ten Maryland locations, stopped accepting plastic bags for recycling. Mom's reluctantly told its customers that the material was being incinerated as waste to energy, and was therefore misleading to customers to offer plastic bag recycling.

Switching to paper is not the answer. The carbon footprint of paper bags is even bigger. Paper production uses trees that could instead be absorbing carbon dioxide, releases more greenhouse gases, takes 3 times the amount of water, and results in 50 times more water pollutants. We can bring our own bags.

But there are people who need more than intrinsic environmental values to remember their bags. They need a nudge. This bill is that nudge.

This type of legislation has proven successful around the world, but we do not need to look further than our own back yard to prove the point.

Montgomery County, MD: A 5 cent fee on paper and single-use plastic bags reduced single-use bag use by 42 percentage points (from 82% to 40%). Washington, DC: City officials say plastic bag usage has plummeted 50 to 70 percent since the fee took effect in 2009 and in 2017, more than three-quarters of city businesses complied with the law – the largest proportion so far.

Let Maryland be the leadership others will follow.

I am asking for a favorable report on HB209 The Plastic and Packaging Reduction Act.

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Resources:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/10/every-minute-one-garbage-truck-of-plastic-is-dumped-into-our-oceans/>

https://scaan.net/docs/ScAAN_Bags_report.pdf