



Testimony on HB 209  
Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act  
Position: Favorable

February 10, 2020  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore's Healthy Harbor Initiative submits this testimony in support of HB 209 – the Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act of 2020, which would prohibit stores from distributing plastic carryout bags and require they charge a price for alternative bags.

Waterfront Partnership is a Business Improvement District responsible for maintaining, improving, and protecting the Inner Harbor. We represent the interests of businesses and developers located along the Baltimore Waterfront. Through our Healthy Harbor Initiative, these businesses have supported the implementation of a stormwater management fee, installed the world's first solar and hydro powered trash interceptor (Mr. Trash Wheel), and advocated for legislation aimed at reducing litter in our neighborhoods, streams, and harbor. We do these things because they are good for the environment but also because a clean environment is good for business.

Since 2014, when we installed Mr. Trash Wheel, **we have removed over 700,000 plastic bags** from the Baltimore Harbor. That's on average 10,000 plastic bags a month!

Waterfront Partnership currently spends \$175,000 a year to remove trash from the water, but this is not a long-term solution. Ultimately, we must change behaviors so that less litter ends up on the ground in the first place. That is because litter on the ground is carried into the Harbor by storm drains, which are located throughout the City. Banning plastic bags while charging a price for alternatives will eliminate plastic bags from the litter stream while ensuring that the public is encouraged to use their own reusable bags instead of purchasing alternative single-use bags.

We use funding we receive from the business community to pick up litter, but we would rather spend it on events, landscaping, and attractions like the Inner Harbor Ice Rink. A bill like HB 209, which promotes behavior change and reduces litter, means we can do just that. We respectfully ask for a favorable report.

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Kayaker in Gwynns Falls stream paddles past a tree containing dozens of plastic bags



Volunteers stand in front of a pile of 1,337 plastic bags collected from the Baltimore Harbor