



## Plastic Free QAC

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

Hon. Kumar P. Barve, Chair, Environment & Transportation Committee  
Hon. Dereck E. Davis, Chair, Economic Matters Committee  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Barve, Chairman Davis, and Committee Members:

My name is Bente Cooney, founder of Plastic Free QAC, a nonprofit organization founded in 2018 around the issue of litter on the streets and waterways of our beautiful county and a realization that our world is drowning in single-use plastic. Our mission is to engage, inform and inspire Queen Anne's County residents and businesses to make more environmentally responsible choices.

With a strong sense that something has to be done and that every one of us has a responsibility to do our part to preserve the health and wellbeing of our shared environment, we have gathered some powerful data. This data supports our first goal of getting rid of single-use plastic shopping bags.

**First**, in 2019, as a result of our road clean ups, our volunteers picked up close to 1,000 plastic bags, 637 of those alone by Claude Lowery's farm across from Safeway in Chester! "We try to make our farm look neat and attractive," Mr. Lowery said recently, "but all those bags make it difficult." He supports the effort to get rid of disposable plastic bags, as do more than 90 other retailers in Queen Anne's County, surveyed last year. These retailers include not only farmers, but marinas, hotels, schools, shops, and restaurants.

**Second**, we have audited the four grocery stores in QAC and counted every shopper leaving each of the stores for one hour on two occasions. Out of 1,271 shoppers, only 8% used reusable shopping bags. Virtually all of the single-use, disposable bags were plastic. For comparison, we surveyed the Aldi grocery store in Easton, where no plastic bags are available. People brought their own reusable bags (61.5%) or carried their groceries loose in their carts without any bags (32.7%). Only 5.8% used disposable bags.

Only 5% of plastic bags are recycled. Legislators across the country are beginning to recognize the issue of single-use plastic. Already, seven states and 500 localities in the US have enacted bag ban laws. HB 209 not only bans certain single-use plastic bags, it allows retailers to sell paper bags for 10 cents apiece to shoppers who forget to bring their own reusable bags. Plastic Free QAC is excited about this proposed legislation and urge you to report HB 209 favorably out of Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

Sincerely,

Bente Cooney

Founder

Plastic Free QAC

Attached: Queen Anne's County 2020 Shopper Survey

# Queen Anne's County 2020 Shopper Survey

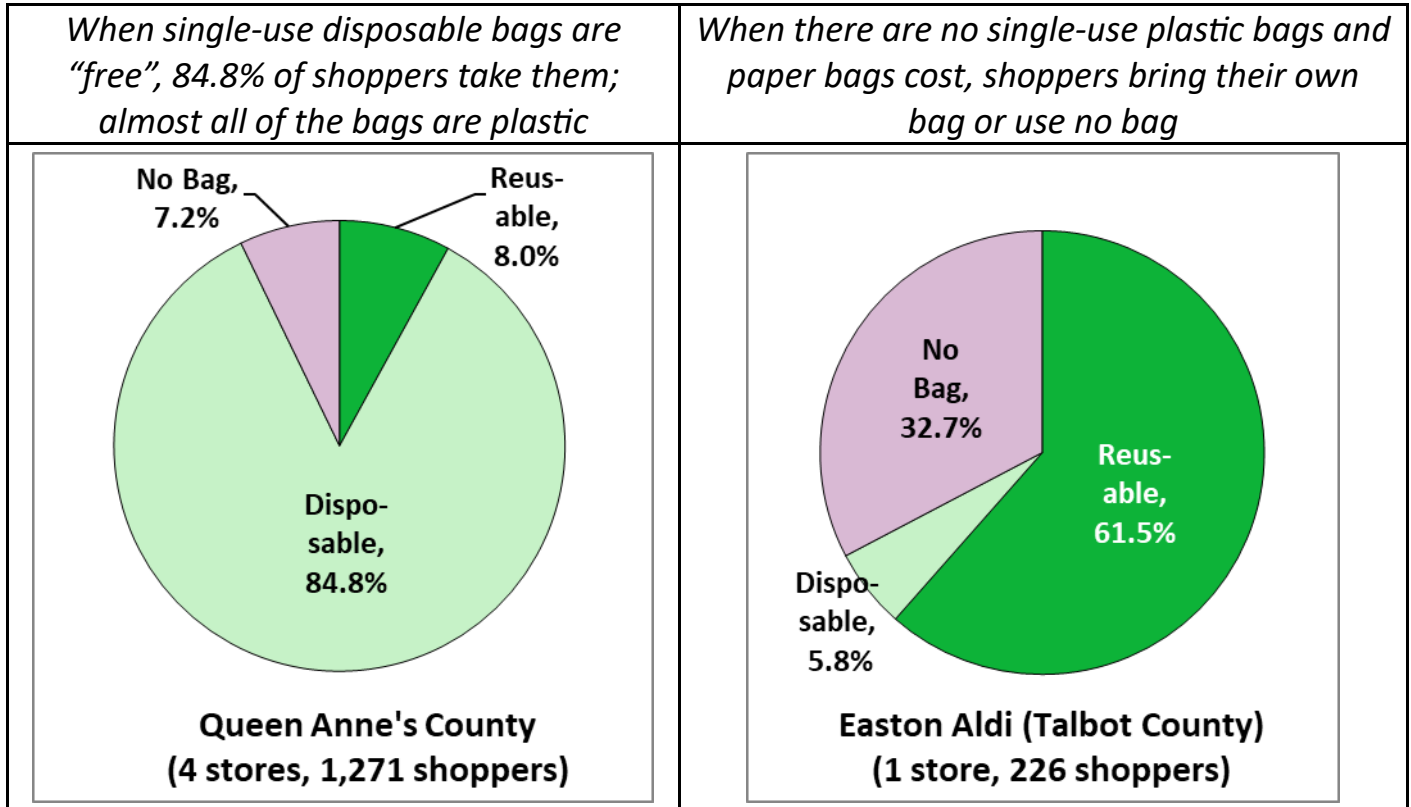
Plastic-Free QAC & Maryland Sierra Club  
January 11-19, 2020

**5** grocery stores, **1,497** shoppers, **12** volunteers

	#	# shop-	Reus-	Dispo-	
Acme, Food Lion, Safeway*	4	1,271	8.0%	84.8%	7.2%
Aldi **	1	226	61.5%	5.8%	32.7%

These stores provide free carryout bags to shoppers. \*\*Nearest Aldi store, in Easton (Talbot County). Aldi does not provide any thin plastic bags, charges 7 cents for a paper bag, and more for various reusable bags.

**Virtually all (99.5%)** of the shoppers with single-use, disposable bags at the four QAC grocery stores had **plastic** bags.



**"FREE" CARRYOUT BAGS**

**BAGS AT COST, NO THIN PLASTIC**