



February 11, 2020

House Bill 209

Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Position: FAVORABLE

The continued proliferation of single-use plastic bags has a significant financial impact to Anne Arundel County. In 2019, the County was charged an additional \$360,000 by our recycling contractor for placing non-recyclable materials in recycling bins. Much of this non-recyclable material was film plastic, such as that used for single-use plastic bags. The plastic bags clog the recycling machinery, become shredded, and “contaminate” the entire load of recyclables. When this happens, the load is diverted from the recycling center to a landfill negating all the work that citizens, the County and the recycling company went through to conserve landfill space in the first place.

Over the past three years, the County has spent approximately \$100,000 on outreach efforts to educate citizens that plastic bags and other non-recyclable materials should not be placed into their recycling bins. Additionally, the County spent almost \$200,000 cleaning up litter in 2019, much of which consisted of single-use plastic bags. Removing the majority of single-use plastic bags entirely from the waste stream will result in significant cost savings for Anne Arundel County.

The Anne Arundel County Administration also supports the broader objective of HB209: ending reliance on single-use bags of all kinds. The County has distributed 20,000 reusable bags to citizens since 2010, and could distribute even more with cost savings to the recycling program if single-use plastic bags are removed from the waste stream entirely.

We request a FAVORABLE report for HB209.