

February 20, 2020

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Opposition of House Bill 700 (Highway Construction - Storm Drains - Covers and Task Force on Preventing Debris From Entering Storm Drains)

Dear Chairman Barve:

The Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, opposes House Bill 700 (Highway Construction - Storm Drains - Covers and Task Force on Preventing Debris From Entering Storm Drains).

This bill requires any new or replacement storm drain cover installed on a street or highway to prevent debris larger than one inch in height or circumference from passing through the storm drain. This could be very costly to business as well as the counties. We believe that the taskforce should be implemented and complete its work prior to any requirement being implemented.

The bill also establishes the Task Force on Preventing Debris from Entering Storm Drains to study methods of preventing plastic bottles and other debris from entering storm drains and washing into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through stormwater runoff.

Our industry supports a cleaner Bay, and believes a task force to study these important issues could be very helpful. However, we would like the bill to be amended section (b) listing the members of the task force. The bill in its current form includes 3 representatives of the environmental protection industry, but no representatives from the commercial or residential industries which are responsible for the construction of many grates and storm drains throughout the State. To encourage an unbiased review and ensure any recommendations consider the economic and physical feasibility of any potential measures, we believe the commercial and residential building industries should be represented on this task force.

We hope this measure will enable all stakeholders to collaborate towards implementing effective policy. MBIA respectfully requests an unfavorable report unless the requirements of installing the storm drains is removed and the task force is able to do their job and determine the best, most effective way of moving forward.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: House Environment and Transportation Committee Members