



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 313

Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation requests a favorable report on SB 313 Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act from the Finance Committee. This bill seeks to reduce plastic pollution by prohibiting retailers from distributing plastic bags to customers at the point of sale and imposing a ten-cent price for paper bags provided to customers.

Nearly two million single-use plastic bags are distributed worldwide every minute. Many of these bags become litter that degrades residential communities and pollutes natural environments. The Chesapeake Bay is a landing point for plastics pollution. Plastics pollution harms shorelines and water habitats and threatens aquatic life. As plastic pollution breaks down, it forms microplastics. These microplastics create an imbalance in the food chain in Chesapeake Bay, disrupting the primary food source for many marine animals.¹

This legislation attempts to reduce plastic pollution at the source through reducing the number of plastic bags introduced in Maryland. The prohibition on plastic bags and price on paper alternatives intends to encourage customers to adopt the habit of re-usable bags. The bill's requirements and incentives aim to reduce plastics pollution. If successful, SB 313 may lessen the plastic debris entering local rivers and streams and protect the Chesapeake Bay from pollution from its tributaries.

For these reasons, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation urges a favorable report on SB 313. Please contact Carmera Thomas-Wilhite, Baltimore Program Manager, at carmerathomas@cbf.org with any questions.

¹ Cole, M. (2015). The Impact of Polystyrene Microplastics on Feeding, Function and Fecundity in the Marine Copepod *Calanus helgolandicus*. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 49, 2, 1130-1137. <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/es504525u>.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 107,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.