



**PET INDUSTRY JOINT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**
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**TESTIMONY OF THE PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE
MARYLAND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF SENATE BILL 313**

February 20, 2020

POSITION: Request for Exemption

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to offer our views regarding SB 313, a bill that would ban the distribution of plastic bags at point of sale. As the country's largest pet trade association, representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States, PIJAC counts among its members national associations, organizations, corporations and individuals involved in the commercial pet trade. More specifically, PIJAC represents the interests of, pet stores, suppliers, distributors, pet supply manufacturers, retailers and pet owners throughout the state of Maryland and across the country.

Let me start by saying that PIJAC is committed to conservation. We have for many years provided a well-respected animal care certification program that is widely utilized by not only persons in the commercial pet trade but shelters, humane societies and institutes of higher education as well. Our association has long been recognized as the voice for a responsible pet trade, and we routinely advocate legislative and regulatory proposals establishing governmental mandates where appropriate to advance the public interest and welfare of pets and the environment. PIJAC works closely with US Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior and CITES to ensure effective enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act, management of threatened or endangered species and control of invasive species, and have since its inception. We regularly work with federal and state agencies as well as local governments to advance animal welfare and environmental interests.

PIJAC does not take a position on the establishment of bans on the distribution of plastic bags at point of sale. There are situations, however, when a common and essential use is overlooked. Plastic bags are commonly used in pet stores for the transportation of live plants and animals such as aquarium fish and are the option that is the most ecologically friendly, cost effective, and the safest for the transported animal. Many of our members print information on Habitatitude©, a joint PIJAC/USFWS program to prevent invasive species, on the plastic bags that are used to transport aquarium plants and animals. Further, eliminating the use of plastic bags would necessitate the use of Tupperware type containers which contain more plastic and require a more involved manufacturing process, increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

We request that you include an exemption for such use. The language that we suggest be included in the exceptions section is "Bags used to contain live plants or live animals, such as fish, snails, shrimp or insects sold in pet stores."

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Likins", written over a horizontal line.

Robert Likins
Vice President, Government Affairs
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council