

5515 Smallwood Ct,  
Clarksville, MD 21029

**Testimony on SB 313**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**  
**February 17, 2020**

Dear Chairwoman Delores Kelly and Members of the Committee,

I totally support, and hope you will support, as well, the plastic and Packaging Reduction Act. This is vitally important. There are so many ways we can each do our part to reduce plastic pollution and learning to carry re-usable bags is one of the easiest things we can do, with tremendous positive ecological benefits. Untold millions of plastic bags are mindlessly used every single day, often for just a few minutes before being thrown into the trash for an endless presence in our soils and waterways. Paper bags present additional concerns, as outlined below. In countries and individual stores where bags are not provided...people quickly adapt. Think about Costco for example! No bags? No problem! People figure it out. And the statistics are clear. The fewer plastic bags dispensed in stores...the fewer show up in the environment. It's so easy. Take this step and encourage everyone in the political process to do the same. Every minute counts. Every plastic bag NOT used, is one less bag in the ocean. Every paper bag NOT used, leads to one more tree doing its good work of protecting the air and soil.

We are in a plastic pollution crisis. Every minute of every day a garbage truck of plastic is dumped into our oceans. If we carry on as usual, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050. By 2050, this could mean there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans. The system needs to change.

The Plastic and Packaging Act will help reduce plastic pollution, plastic's harmful side effects and, as importantly, this bill will also help change our "throwaway" mentality.

2 million single-use plastic bags are consumed every minute. These bags often wind up in waterways and our landscape, degrading water and soil as they break down into tiny toxic bits. These bags have a massive carbon footprint.

Beginning on New Year's Day, Mom's Organic Market, with ten Maryland locations, stopped accepting plastic bags for recycling. Mom's reluctantly told its customers that the material was being incinerated as waste to energy, and was therefore misleading to customers to offer plastic bag recycling.

Switching to paper is not the answer. The carbon footprint of paper bags is even bigger. Paper production uses trees that could instead be absorbing carbon dioxide, releases more greenhouse gases, takes 3 times the amount of water, and results in 50 times more water pollutants. We can bring our own bags.

But there are people who need more than intrinsic environmental values to remember their bags. They need a nudge. This bill will be that nudge.

This type of legislation has proven successful around the world, but we do not need to look further than our own backyard to prove the point. Montgomery County, MD: A 5 cent fee on paper and single-use plastic bags reduced single-use bag use by 42 percentage points (from 82% to 40%). Washington, DC: City officials say plastic bag usage has plummeted 50 to 70 percent since the fee took effect in 2009 and in 2017, more than three-quarters of city businesses complied with the law – the largest proportion so far.

Let Maryland be the leadership others will follow.

I am asking for a favorable report on SB 313 The Plastic and Packaging Reduction Act.

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