



February 20, 2020

Senate Bill 313

Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

Senate Finance Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Anne Arundel County Administration **SUPPORTS** SB 313 - Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act. This Bill will help to eliminate a product that is used only once before clogging our waterways and contaminating our recycling waste stream.

In 2018, Anne Arundel County government and private retail businesses sent over 55,000 tons of film plastic to a collector business to be recycled into post-consumer products. For perspective, an Olympic-sized swimming pool holds 2,750 tons of water. In one year, our government, citizens, and businesses recycled the weight-equivalent of 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools. That is the good news. The bad news is this number does not speak to the amount of film plastic that was not properly recycled, and either contaminated the County's other recyclables or contaminated the environment.

In 2019, the County spent almost \$200,000 cleaning up litter, much of which consisted of single-use plastic bags. Additionally, 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 recycling machinery, become shredded, and "contaminate" the entire load of recyclables. When this happens, the load is either 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, or recycling companies offer a lower price to the County for a lower-quality product.

Over the last year Anne Arundel County has undertaken a costly, but necessary education and outreach campaign to remind residents that loose plastic bags cannot be placed in single-stream recycling bins. Removing plastic bags from the waste stream will not only improve our recycling and lower our overall costs, but it will protect our environment and the Chesapeake Bay.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 313.