



MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

February 20, 2020

SUPPORT – SB313 Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

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Dear Madame Chairwoman Kelley and members of the Committee:

My name is María Guardado and I am a Community Organizer with Chispa Maryland, the Latino outreach program of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters. I work and live with my family in Langley park, Prince George's County. Langley Park is a community where upwards of 80% of residents are Latino. And I would like to share with you some of the things that I have learned working in this community and other Latino communities in Maryland.

Trash is one of the constant concerns in our community. This is a tangible problem in our neighborhoods, and it is also one of the indicators of a neighborhood that is neglected and unsafe. Every year the community gets together to do two community cleanups where entire families participate. We collect garbage from our parks, roadsides, bus stops, and our streets. And one of the items we find the most, year after year, are plastic bags.

Plastic bags are wasteful and pollute rivers and parks where we go with to play soccer, celebrate birthdays, or just to have a good time with our families. Plastic bags are also very harmful to the environment. When it rains, all those plastic bags that litter our streets end up in our rivers, where they break into small pieces and fish, birds, and other animals eat them thinking it is food.

I urge you to ban plastic bags and avoid all the damage they do in our community and in many other communities in Maryland. Plastic bags stray away from our tradition of using reusable shopping bags. We grew up without plastic bags. Since we were little, we always went shopping with our own cloth bags or shopping cart. If we grew up without using plastic bags, we can also live without plastic bags now.

This bill gives the option to pay for a bag paper bag or not. Currently, all of us as consumers pay for plastic bags regardless of whether we use them or not. Single-use bags are not free and continuing to charge people who want to use a reusable bag is not right.

We are a resourceful community that values the future of our families, and banning plastic bags will benefit our community, the environment and our families.

For these reasons I urge a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you.

Maria Guardado