

February 12, 2021

Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of HB 69: Environment – Packaging, Container and Paper products – Producer Responsibility.

Good day members of the Environment and Transportation, and Economic Matters Committees.

I am writing to you today to support for reducing the use of single use food containers across the state of Maryland. I also supported HB 36 and HB 314, and I remain hopeful that we can all build on the work being proposed in all of these similar bills. Helping to do our part in safeguarding our environment.

Takeaway meals, and packaging items are pretty common place in most of today's restaurants, grocery stores and many retail stores across the state, and across our nation. Cardboard, paper and plastic containers are cheap, easy to obtain, and can carry a wide variety of items. But there is a heavy cost to our environment for this kind of convenience.

We have an obligation to the next generation, to hand over a cleaner, more livable planet than the one we were given by our parents. Everywhere you look on Maryland's streets and highways there are discarded food containers. They very often never make it into trash and recycling collection cans and end up in in our environment and some land in The Chesapeake Bay's estuaries, waterways negatively impacting our delicate ecosystem. Environmentally unfriendly container and plastic in our oceans is another big environmental disaster that has been unfolding over the course of many years. Let's see if we can make positive changes to policy that can help protect our environment and the bay. Packaging items can often take years, and decades, to decompose in our trash piles and landfills all over MD.

Inconsistent environmental policies within our region have made the use of plastic bags less prominent in some areas, but not in others. Patchwork solutions seldom work well. We need policy that is bold, wide reaching, and can make a positive impact across the state. And maybe help to influence our regional neighbors, and their environmental policies.

We have other alternatives to carry our take away food items from the store, restaurant or market. In this bill, the business community has an opportunity to address the long-term effects of their containers, packaging and paper products. We have better, more earth friendly alternatives to these items. Please let's discourage the use of disposable, single use packaging and encourage the use of environmentally sound alternatives while making business owners part of the solution.

Please vote to support HB 69 and return a favorable vote on this important bill.
Thank you for your time and considering of my testimony today.

Mr. Richard Ceruolo