



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony HB 69 –  
Environment – Single-Use Plastics – Restrictions**

This past interim I served on Chair Barve’s Workgroup on Waste & Recycling. We had multiple meetings and heard from participants across the waste & recycling sectors. In addition, we sent a survey to all counties and the City of Baltimore. In that survey, we asked a number of questions about their waste, recycling, and compost systems and asked for suggestions on how the state could support their work. The biggest piece that jumped out from their responses is that the jurisdictions are losing money on their programs and they need help.

Maryland jurisdictions – like the rest of the world – are facing a plastic crisis. Over 8 billion tons of plastic have been produced since the 1950s, and only 9% has been recycled.<sup>1</sup> Alarmingly, the International Solid Waste Association estimates consumption of single use plastics has grown 250-300% during the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> A lot of those plastics cannot be recycled, such as the things in this bill: straws, stirrers, lids, condiments, and utensils. Our jurisdictions have to deal with them and ultimately we end up paying for them – as trash to be hauled, litter to be cleaned up from our neighborhoods, and garbage in our waterways.

Another thing that became abundantly clear during the Workgroup meetings is that the only way to truly address the plastic crisis is to follow the adage that we all know: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. This bill falls under the Reduce part. HB 69 will prohibit food service businesses from providing certain single-use plastic products unless requested by a customer. These products include utensils, straws, lids, stoppers, and stirrers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/plastic-pollution-facts/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-covid-19-pandemic-single-use-plastic-coronavirus/7872846/;](https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-covid-19-pandemic-single-use-plastic-coronavirus/7872846/)  
[https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/news/countys-plastic-waste-increases-as-residents-stay-home-during-pandemic/;](https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/news/countys-plastic-waste-increases-as-residents-stay-home-during-pandemic/)  
<https://abc7.com/society/covid-pandemic-generating-spike-in-plastic-waste-in-us/7906927/>

Amendments:

- I have worked with the Restaurant Association and taken all but one of their amendments, the one relating to delivery. Delivery of meals during the pandemic has helped fuel the rise in single-use plastics. Many of the apps now have an opt-in if customers want plastics; keeping delivery services in the bill is consistent with allowing the plastics if the customer asks for them.
- The penalty is taken directly from HB 314, the plastic bag ban.
- I have taken out the portion relating to hotels. You may remember that last year Marriott and the Hotel Industry testified with me in support of my bill transitioning from single-use plastic bottles of shampoo, conditioner and body wash to bulk dispensers. They still support this move and we are continuing the conversation.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 69.