

Testimony in of HB0069 Single-Use Plastics - Restrictions

Hearing Date: February 9, 2021

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Love Committee: Environment and Transportation/Economics Matters

Submitting: Less Plastic Please Position: Support

Dear members of the Environmental and Transportation Committee,

We have a plastic waste crisis of epidemic proportions. We are producing over 300 million tons of plastic every year, almost 50% of which is for single-use purposes – utilized for just a few moments, but on the planet for at least several hundred year.

An estimated 11 million metric tons of plastic waste enter the ocean every year. Without immediate and sustained action, that amount will nearly triple by 2040.

The production of plastics has increased 20-fold in the past half-century, and it is expected to grow even more.

Single-use and short-lived plastic applications have the highest disposal rates, the lowest recyclability, and pose a major challenge to our health, ecosystems and economy. In 2011, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Association found that plastic debris accumulates pollutants such as DDT, PCBs, PAHs, and flame retardants up to 100,000 to 1,000,000 times the levels found in seawater. These chemicals are known or suspected carcinogens, are genetic disruptors and numerous other ill effects.

Regulations on consumer items that damage the environment have proven to be an effective way to reduce single-use plastic, change behavior and support for other waste reducing legislation. For example, studies show companies that offer straws on demand reduce straw consumption by 40%, diminishing the increased cost of switching to paper straws and allowing restaurants to save money while saving the planet. [1]

Regulations, such as the bag ban, single-use plastic reduction laws and bottle bills have a long history of effectiveness. I am proud to say Howard County can give first hand testimony to the effectiveness of regulations. Before the Howard County Bag Bill, shoppers were using an embarrassing 76.6% disposable bags. Yet just two months after it went effect, the disposable bag use dropped to 41.8%. Regulations work.

One of the largest hotel groups, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), which includes Holiday Inn, Hyatt

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), which includes Holiday Inn, Hyatt and Marriott Hotels have committed to install bulk-size amenities in its 843,000 bathrooms. For those lodging facilities that need more than financial and intrinsically environmental reasons to change, this bill will assure facilities operate responsibly.

We must attack this crisis with every arrow in our quiver. HB0069 is a critically important arrow in our quiver to effectively reduce single-use plastic.

We live on a finite planet. We need to shift towards sustainable production and consumption to keep within the environmental boundaries of our planet.

I urge a favorable report on HB0069.

Pat Hersey

[1] <https://digital.detritusjournal.com/articles/assessing-the-use-of-default-choice-modification-to>