

Senate Committee: Finance Committee

House Committee: Environment and Transportation Committee

Testimony on: SB 223/HB 314 - "Plastic Bag Reduction Act"

Organization: Individual

Person Submitting: Joseph Jakuta

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 28, 2021

Joseph Jakuta, as resident of District 47A, supports SB 223/HB 314, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act.

My weekends are often spent going on hikes with my two small children in Maryland's great state parks, jogging along the trails that follow the Anacostia River, or taking bike rides throughout the state. Nearly every day of the week, prior to Covid-19, I also walk to the bus stop with my eldest child to send him off to school or walk my dog throughout the City of Mount Rainier and neighboring Brentwood. And wherever I go from the most pristine parks of Western Maryland to the alley behind our neighborhood small businesses there are plastic bags everywhere. In the trees, on the streets, in the streams, in the parks... Through all of these experiences I can say for certain it is time for a change, it is time to ban single-use bags.

I also have led numerous litter pick ups around Mount Rainier as the chair of the Mount Rainier Green Team. I also regularly participate in the Anacostia Watershed Society's Earth Day clean up as a site leader. I also, before Covid-19, went on plogs (a plog is where someone jogs and collects trash as they run). In all these instances there seems to be no limit to how many disposable bags there are that are tarnishing our beautiful state. And volunteers can only do so much to clean up a mess we aren't even responsible for. It is time for a systematic change. It is time to join California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon, and Vermont and ban disposable plastic bags.

Since Covid-19 this problem has gotten worse in many ways. The first one that comes to mind is that people, such as myself, are less likely to pick up litter they encounter. There was also a proliferation of use of single-use plastic bags in response to the virus itself, this despite the fact that it is an airborne virus and many virologists have come out saying that reusable bags don't lead to the spread of diseases.¹ But Covid-19 has also made something else clear, we simply cannot count on the goodness of volunteers and neighbors to keep Maryland beautiful, we need a systemic solution. And this legislation is part of the answer.

To help with evidence as to the problem I also attached some pictures from plogs I have completed pre-Covid in 2020 as an attachment. I will attest that these pictures could easily be taken to this day.

I encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

¹ https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Health-Expert-Statement_125-experts.pdf

Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 1
Quite a plastic bag haul for my first run of the New Year in MD-47 along the NW Branch. Resolve to support the MD Plastic Bag Ban in 2020.
[@anacostiaws](#) [@TrashFreeMD](#)



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 5
Small, but very wet and yucktastic plastic bag haul on today's dog walk.
[#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 11
Beautiful white bag in a tree in Mount Rainier. [#MDBagBan2020](#)
[#TrashFreeMD](#)



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 25
The end of another run through the beautiful plastic bag lined streets of suburban Maryland. [#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 26
Another plastic bag full run through MD22 & MD47. So many bags y'all get two tweets today! [#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 26
Another plastic bag full run through MD22 & MD47. And here is the second tweet. [#MDBagBan2020](#) [#TrashFreeMD](#)



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Jan 27
Only one bag per block found on a quick lunchtime dog walk to the park in suburban Maryland. #MDBagBan2020 #TrashFreeMD



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 1
Another plastic bag full dog walk along the Anacostia NW Branch. Glad @anacostiaws, @TrashFreeMD, @MDSierraClub and others are working hard to end this! #MDBagBan2020 #TrashFreeMD



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 2
Another plastic bag #plog in MD47. Note this is the same 1/4 mile I did on yesterday's dog walk. Glad @AugustineMLA and @JulianiveyPG are sponsoring bills to end this scourge. #MDBagBan2020 #TrashFreeMD



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 9
I scampered through part of 47B along the NW Branch on my #plog today. Glad to see that @WanikaFisher is working to end this problem by co-sponsoring the #MDBagBan2020. #TrashFreeMD



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Jakuta @green_jakuta · Feb 17
Lovely day for a holiday dog walk around Mount Rainier. Surprised at the small bag haul. Still 5 bags too many. #TrashFreeMD #MDBagBan2020



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