



## HB314/SB223 – Plastic Bag Reduction Act

### Testimony before Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2021

**Position: Favorable**

Madame Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB223**, to eliminate the use of disposable, single-use plastic bags in our communities. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

Our planetary home is in crisis. A crisis that is literally getting us buried in throwaway plastic. According to the United Nations, more than 5 trillion single-use plastic bags are used every year, most of which end up in our oceans, landfills, or turned into toxic air pollution via incineration. Recycling of single-use plastic is technologically limited and impractical, resulting in less than 10% rate of recycling. The plastic that does end up in our oceans persists for 100's of years, and kills an incalculable amount of marine animals each year. Despite all of this, ***the fossil fuel industry has responded with misinformation and aggressive growth goals, aiming to actually increase the amount of throwaway plastic that consumers use each year.***

SB223 moves our state in a new direction – eliminating most routine uses of single-use plastic bags. It specifies a long list of exempted uses, such as the bagging of fresh seafood or pharmaceutical uses. It encourages the use of reusable bags of all sorts. This is really not a heavy lift for anyone, despite the doomsday scenarios that the plastics industry will predictably roll out. My wife and I recently visited Puerto Rico. This Caribbean commonwealth/island territory has had a plastic bag ban in place for several years. From what we could see, the people had responded beautifully, bringing their own reusable bags for both groceries and the bagging of produce in the store. We talked to several people, who were all very happy that throwaway plastic had been reduced in the region. It is critical for the future health of our planet, that we move forward with this and other similar efforts to reduce single-use plastics.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Richard Deutschmann  
Columbia, MD