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Boyd K. Rutherford  
Lt Governor



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Secretary

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Deputy Secretary

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

**BILL:** House Bill 135 - Environment – Single–Use Plastics – Restrictions

**COMMITTEE:** House Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters

**DATE:** February 2, 2022

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

Upon review of House Bill 135 – Environment – Single–Use Plastics – Restrictions, the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee, Chaired by the Maryland Department of General Services, provides these comments for your consideration.

This bill would prohibit a food service business from providing plastic or plastic-coated single-use food or beverage products unless the customer requests or accepts. It would also require a food service business to maintain a limited stock of single-use plastic straws. The spirit of the bill is to reduce the manufacture and use of plastics, reducing our waste and impact on the environment.

Established by the Green Maryland Act of 2010, the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee (GPC) administers an environmentally preferable purchasing program for the state. State Finance and Procurement § 14-410 charges the Committee with providing the State information and assistance regarding environmentally preferable purchasing, including the development and implementation of statewide policies, guidelines, programs, best practices, and regulations.

Per Chapter 580, 2019 Maryland Laws (SB 285), effective July 1, 2019 Expanded Polystyrene Food Service Products were banned in the State. Following this legislation, restrictions on plastic or plastic-coated single-use food or beverage products is a logical next step for Maryland's environmentally conscious consumption and purchasing practices. The greenest product purchasing options are those that contain recycled content and/or are recyclable or compostable after use. However, many single-use plastic or plastic-coated food service ware products are unable to be recycled and must be disposed of with common waste. Though these products are used for the duration of a single meal, they will remain in Maryland's landfills--which are already reaching capacity--for hundreds of years. Reducing the State's consumption of plastic and plastic-coated single use food or beverage products ensures that fewer of these disposable items end up in landfills.

For additional information, contact Ellen Robertson at 410-260-2908.

