



Committee: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB 135 - Environment - Single-Use Plastics - Restrictions

Organization: WISE

Submitting: Monica O'Connor, Environment/Climate Legislative Liaison

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 31, 2022

Dear Chairperson Wilson and members of the Economic Matters Committee:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. WISE is an all-volunteer women-led group of advocates formed in Anne Arundel County, and has over 600 members. WISE urges you to vote favorably on HB135.

We enthusiastically support HB 135. While the use of a fork or straw may seem small in the scheme of Maryland's daily volume of waste generation, these items are actually prominent. The 2020 International Coastal Clean-up data identified plastic straws as the 7th most commonly collected type of trash.

The Trash Free Seas Alliance, a national partnership of major corporations and conservation organizations, is implementing a strategy to reduce marine litter. HB 135 would implement one of their key strategies – increasing awareness. By requiring certain single use items to be offered or requested, our awareness and consciousness are triggered.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, as part of its marine micro-plastics work, has published a list of less environmentally damaging, alternative products. Montgomery County has published an extensive list of alternative food wares.

The adverse economic impact of litter has been confirmed again and again. The economic benefits of a clean Chesapeake Bay have also been documented. Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and Washington D.C. have all enacted versions of this type of legislation. We

respectfully urge your favorable consideration.