



Bill: 24-24 - Paper Carryout Bags and Prohibition on Plastic Carryout Bags (“Bring Your Own Bag”)

Date: January 14, 2025

Position: Support

Dear Council President Stewart, Vice President Jawando, and Honorable Councilmembers,

Trash Free Maryland strongly supports Bill 24-24, which will ban plastic carryout bags and encourage Montgomery County’s residents to bring and use reusable bags by charging a ten cent fee for paper bags.

Trash Free Maryland works toward a state that is free of trash, debris, and litter, and where communities, public spaces and waterways are safe, healthy, and support economic viability. We base this work on significant contributors to trash pollution, identified through neighborhood and waterway cleanup data.

As a significant source of land and marine litter, banning plastic carryout bags will work to eliminate them as a source of pollution. States and local jurisdictions are increasingly passing plastics legislation to mitigate the growing challenges imposed by single use items both as litter and when entering the municipal waste-stream.

Trash Free Maryland urges you to support this legislation for the following reasons:

- Plastic bags last for years after just a few minutes of use. In the water, wildlife mistakes bags and particles for food or gets tangled in them.
- Plastic bags are made from petroleum and contribute to climate change.
- There are many alternatives to single use bags, and bag fees are a proven mechanism to change behavior and encourage reuse.
- Plastic bags are a costly contaminant in curbside recycling, clogging machinery and presenting a safety hazard.
- Microplastics are an increasing concern for both environmental and public health, and stemming plastic bag litter would be a step toward reducing macro trash pollution that contributes to accumulating levels of microplastics in our marine environments.

Our research shows the key components to a successful program to encourage reusables include a tight definition of a reusable bag *and* an effective fee (10 cents) for paper alternative bags. Your bill, as introduced, includes these components and strengthens incentives for people to bring their own bags. We also laud your efforts to consider impacts and increase access to reusables.

By passing this bill, the County will take a major step to remove this ubiquitous source of pollution. Trash Free Maryland strongly urges the Council to pass Bill 24-24.

Contact:

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