



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Martin O'Malley
Governor

Robert M. Summers, Ph.D.
Secretary

Anthony G. Brown
Lieutenant Governor

February 25, 2014

The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chair
Members, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Senate Office Building, Suite 2W
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support, Senate Bill 707 – *Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2014*

Dear Chairwoman Conway and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed Senate Bill 707 – *Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2014* – and we would like to express our support for the bill's overall objectives of recycling and waste reduction.

MDE recognizes that there is a trend toward increased recycling of plastic bags and that the District of Columbia has seen great success in implementing their "Skip the Bag, Save the River" law to reduce litter and increase the use of reusable shopping bags. The Department is supportive of these types of activities that would result in reduced disposal and littering, increased recycling of plastic and paper shopping bags, and greater usage of reusable shopping bags. Waste diversion and recycling saves energy, reduces greenhouse gasses and other pollutants generated in the manufacturing process and at landfills, saves natural resources, and reduces the amount of waste disposed.

Additionally, MDE has determined that the Anacostia River watershed and portions of Baltimore Harbor are actually impaired (i.e., not attaining water quality standards) because of trash. In preparing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to address the trash impairments in these waters, MDE has noted that plastic bags constitute a significant portion of the trash, and that plastic bags are very persistent in the environment. The problem of trash in our streams is an important concern, and an unnecessary source of pollution. MDE supports SB 707 as consistent with the goals of both the Anacostia River trash TMDL and the proposed Baltimore Harbor trash TMDL, as well as with the Department's larger mission to restore and protect our environment.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor Senate Bill 707 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at jeffrey.fretwell@maryland.gov if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Fretwell

cc: Lee Currey, Director, Science Services Administration

