

Reuse to Reduce Litter

WHAT: Bill #13-0241, A ten-cent fee on disposable plastic and paper bags

LEAD SPONSOR: Councilman Brandon Scott



Trash Free
MARYLAND

This legislation will

- Reduce trash pollution in Baltimore's neighborhoods and waterways. Plastic bag use could drop 60% or more.
- Save retailers money by not having to buy as many bags to give away. A single shop owner could save upwards of \$1,000 per year.
- Save consumers money when they avoid the hidden cost of "free" bags in higher prices. The average Baltimore consumer spends up to \$37.50 each year in hidden bag costs.
- Create green jobs by giving the city valuable funds for community investments such as parks maintenance, neighborhood greening, and polluted runoff improvements.
- Distribute hundreds of thousands of free cloth bags to those in need.

Why does Baltimore need stronger bag reduction legislation?

- Baltimore City currently spends \$10 million every year to clean up litter.
- Businesses in the Inner Harbor area pay an additional \$300,000 via the Waterfront Partnership for enhanced litter pickup service, to clean what the City misses, prevent crime, and keep the area attractive to visitors, workers, and residents.
- Now that the Inner Harbor has been declared impaired by trash under the Clean Water Act, Baltimore City will soon be required to implement new measures to reduce litter—a cost borne by taxpayers. Source reduction is a no-cost solution.
- Skimmer boats remove more than 600 tons of trash from Harbor waters each year.

What are the results in DC?

- In four years the bag fee generated \$7 million, invested in environmental nonprofits and small green businesses working to restore local waterways, leading to the creation of green jobs.
- Businesses, from mom & pop shops to national chains, report saving on overhead and less litter on their properties. Only 8 percent of business owners are bothered by the bag fee.
- 80 percent of DC residents say they have changed their behavior and shop with reusable bags, reducing bag litter in neighborhoods by more than two-thirds.

For more information, please visit www.TrashFreeMaryland.org.