

Support HB 534

Single-use plastic or paper bags; prohibition.

Delegate Betsy Carr

Reasons to Support House Bill 534

1. Plastic pollution is clogging and contaminating our streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, where plastic waste threatens marine life and an entire ecosystem. In a recent study, researchers found micro-plastic waste – in all but one of 60 samples taken in the Bay.
2. A simple fix to address this major source of pollution is moving to regulate disposable plastic bags.
3. On average, a plastic bag is used for 12 minutes. That same plastic bag can take up to 1,000 years to break down. Worldwide, it's estimated that as many as 1 trillion plastic bags are consumed every year – that translates to more than 1 million per minute, billions of which end up as litter in our environment.
4. Single-use paper bags also present a threat to our environment. Studies show it takes four times as much energy to manufacture a paper bag than its plastic counterpart, and the raw materials have to come from trees, a natural resource that helps absorb atmospheric carbon.
5. Paper bags generate 70 percent more air pollution, and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic.
6. It takes 91 percent less energy to recycle a plastic bag than it does a paper bag, and because of their weight, shipping them uses more fuel per bag.

Overview

HB 1534 prohibits retailers in a grocery store, convenience store, or drug store from providing to any consumer a disposable plastic bag or disposable paper bag unless it is a: Durable plastic bag with handles that are specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse; plastic bag used to carry ice cream, meat, fish, poultry, leftover restaurant food, newspapers, or dry cleaning; plastic bag used to carry alcoholic beverages or prescription drugs; or plastic bag sold in a package containing multiple such bags and intended for use as a bag for garbage, pet waste, or leaf removal.



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This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.