

SUPPORT HB 2178

Topic: Plastics: Regulation of discharging preproduction plastic; requirements.

Bill Patron: Delegate Clark

OVERVIEW:

Requires the Department of Environmental Quality to establish a program to ensure zero discharge or release of preproduction plastics to reduce plastic litter from facilities and through transport. The bill requires the Department to adopt and implement certain requirements in order to reduce and control the discharge or release of preproduction plastic from such facilities.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- [Plastic pellets](#), also called nurdles, are the building blocks of plastic manufacturing. [Ten trillion](#) pellets are estimated to enter the ocean each year, making them a major source of marine microplastic but laws and regulations have not kept up with this growing source of pollution.
- These microplastics are made to be melted and molded into everyday plastic products, everything from milk jugs to car bumpers. At plastic factories, pellets that fall on the floor or get contaminated with dirt are sometimes washed down drains. There are at least [seven](#) facilities in Virginia that produce such plastics.
- Because they're small and lightweight, plastic pellets are often spilled during transport too. [All](#) of the largest North American freight train companies (by revenue) have spilled plastic pellets into the environment.
- Plastic pellets are extremely difficult to clean up once they reach our waterways, and often polluters are not held accountable.
- Every plastic pellet that has ever been spilled or washed into our waters is likely out there in some form or another. That is because nurdles can take anywhere from [100 to 1,000](#) years to break down.
- Plastic pellets both leach toxic additives and absorb toxic [chemicals](#), including DDT, PCBs, and mercury. These types of pollutants [bioaccumulate](#), meaning they become more concentrated and more toxic as they move up the food chain.
- HB 2178 stipulates zero discharge of plastic pellets in stormwater permits into water sources or land outside a facility. It would require measures to prevent pellet loss from any facilities that make, store, handle or transfer plastic pellets. It's a common-sense solution to systemic plastic pollution.



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