

R027-0708

10 **A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF NON-BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC BAGS**

20 **WHEREAS:** Each year, 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are used. The production and use of
30 plastic bags have significant environmental impacts, including litter or being tangled in
40 the stomachs of whales, sea turtles, and birds; and

50 **WHEREAS:** In regards to U.S. oil consumption – approximately 12 million barrels annually is used to
60 make plastic bags; and

70 **WHEREAS:** According to the Algalita Marin Research Foundation, plastic bags do not biodegrade,
80 but break down through abrasion and being torn into small toxic bits that contaminate
90 soil, waterways, and the marine environment, where they are mistaken for food by
100 animals; and

110 **WHEREAS:** Marine debris is everywhere and can be found from highly populated urban beaches to
120 the most remote arctic beaches; and

130 **WHEREAS:** Plastic bags contaminate recycling operations and are otherwise difficult to recycle due to
140 the logistics of sorting, contamination of inks, and the low quality of the plastic used,
150 resulting in an extremely low estimated recycling rate of 1-3%; and

160 **WHEREAS:** Retail outlet stores could educate and encourage their customers to use environmentally
170 preferable alternatives to non-biodegradable plastic bags, which are readily available,
180 including reusable cloth bags, biodegradable plastic bags, and even paper bags which,
190 despite having an adverse impact on the environment, are collected by curbside recycling
200 program; and

210 **WHEREAS:** Governments in several countries, including Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, South Africa,
220 Bangladesh, and the Republic of Ireland have taken action to discourage the use of non-
230 biodegradable plastic bags; and

240 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** The Maryland Student Legislature recommends that the Maryland
250 General Assembly pass and the Governor sign legislation mandating regulations to
260 decrease the use of non-biodegradable plastic shopping bags by large retail chains
270 establishments in the state of Maryland that gross one million dollars or more annually.
280 Establishments are to provide incentives for shoppers to use reusable and recyclable bags.
290 Establishments are required to collect and recycle plastic shopping bags.

300 **MANDATES:** Martin O’Malley, Governor
310 Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor
320 Thomas V Mike Miller, Jr, President of the Senate
330 Michael Busch, Speaker of the House
340 John D Porcari, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation

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