



F R O M	Name & Title	Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Commissioner 	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 210 Guilford Ave.		
	Subject	Council Bill 08-0060 Plastic Bag Restrictions		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o
409 City Hall

March 20, 2008

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to provide testimony in response to Council Bill 08-0060. The purpose of the Bill is to prohibit certain supermarkets and formula retail stores from using petroleum-based plastic bags.

The BCHD Division of Environmental Health oversees over 5,000 food facilities in Baltimore City and routinely inspects these establishments to ensure compliance with state and local food safety regulations. Grocery stores are a food establishment and are inspected based on their priority assessment. All the large grocery stores, e.g., Safeway, Giant, Whole Foods, are high priority facilities and require one environmental inspection (all areas of the store are inspected including restrooms, storage areas and the exterior of the facility) and two monitoring inspections (only critical items are reviewed) per year. Generally, the corner markets are moderate facilities. Thus, they require one environmental inspection and only one monitoring inspection per year.

Under Council Bill 08-0060, BCHD sanitarians will be authorized to issue citations to those facilities regulated under the bill, which continue to use noncompostable plastic bags. While sanitarians will not routinely inspect for the use of these bags, citations will be issued as they are conducting regular inspections of food facilities. In addition, if a citizen files a complaint that is found to be valid, citations will be issued.

Cc: Angela Gibson

