


F R O M	Name & Title	Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Commissioner JS	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 210 Guilford Ave.		
	Subject	Council Bill 08-0205 Plastic Bag Reduction		

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

October 3, 2008

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to provide testimony in response to Council Bill 08-0306. The purpose of the Bill is to prohibit certain markets and formula retailers stores from using non-sustainable checkout bags and authorizes civil enforcement action and criminal penalties for non-compliance.

BCHD greatly supports the City's initiative to create policies that will lead to sustainability. Furthermore, the Department is aware that reducing the distribution and reliance on plastic bags is necessary towards reaching this goal.

As the Bill reads at this time, however, markets and formula retail establishments have the option of engaging in the City's move towards being more environmentally conscience. Section 16-4(2) specifically states that these establishments "may provide customers . . . with recyclable paper bags or reusable bags." These establishments already have the legal right to decide on the type of checkout bags to distribute. Therefore, this bill does nothing to require markets and formula retail establishments to participate in the City's sustainability initiative.

In order for this Bill to meet its stated purpose, the language of Section 16-4 will need to be modified. BCHD has no position on the current drafting of this bill.

Cc: Angela Gibson

no position

