



F R O M	Name & Title	Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Commissioner of Health 	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street		
	Subject	Council Bill 08-0209 – Paper Bags – Surcharge		

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

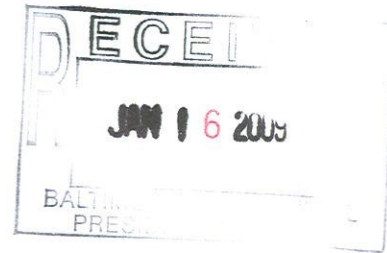
December 6, 2008

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to provide testimony in response to Council Bill 08-0209. The purpose of the Bill is to impose a surcharge on paper bags provided by dealers to customers and provides for the collection and remittance of the surcharge.

BCHD supports the concept of the City's initiative towards sustainability and reducing the public's reliance on non-eco-friendly paper bags. Paper bags are not a solution to the public's reliance on plastic bags. Facts show that the manufacturing of paper bags emits 70% more global warming gasses than manufacturing plastic bags. Paper bag manufacturing also creates 50 times more water pollution and uses four times more raw materials. Furthermore, current research shows that paper bags in landfills do not degrade or break down at a substantially faster rate than plastic. The lack of water, light and oxygen in landfills prevents the degrading of any material.

Overall, both plastic and paper bags are harmful for the environment. For these reasons, the Health Department supports efforts to promote regular use of reusable bags.

Cc: Angela Gibson



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