

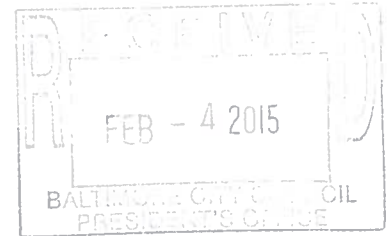
MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable President and Members of the City Council  
Attention: Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

FROM: William H. Cole, President and CEO *WHC*

DATE: February 2, 2015

SUBJECT: City Council Bill No. 15-0469  
Plastic Bag Reduction



There is strong precedent for bag bans to effectively reduce bag consumption. However, the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) cannot offer support for a city-wide plastic bag ban in Baltimore City's current retail environment.

Baltimore City retailers, especially our independent grocers, currently face economic pressures unique to locating in Baltimore City. These pressures include high real property and personal property tax rates, a beverage container tax, expensive workforce development programs, and high security and shrinkage costs.

A bag ban will place an additional burden on Baltimore retailers and present an economic advantage for neighboring jurisdictions. Moreover, Baltimore retailers have expressed concerns that the ban will not be enforced evenly across the retail sector and that re-usable bags may increase retail shrinkage.

The absence of paper bags from the ordinance is particularly disconcerting. This will hurt retailers when customers shift from plastic bag to paper bag consumption (paper bags cost retailers well over twice that of plastic bags). Finally, the potential for criminal prosecution is seen as a direct affront to the business community.

BDC respectfully requests that, in the case any ordinance is adopted, it is amended to include:

- A paper bag surcharge;
- The distribution of the City's existing reusable bag inventory at grocery stores;
- Dedicated funding to pay for on-going distribution of re-usable bags; and
- Dedicated funding to pay for implementation and enforcement of the program.

cc: Colin Tarbert  
Angela Gibson

*Fav w/Amend*