



FROM	Name & Title	Oxiris Barbot, MD Commissioner 	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	Council Bill 12-0104: Food Establishments – Polystyrene Products		

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

August 1, 2012

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 12-0104 Zoning Food Establishments – Polystyrene Products. The purpose of this bill is to prohibit food service establishments from using cups, plates, dishes, bowls, containers or similar items made from polystyrene.

Polystyrene foam is made with petroleum, a non-sustainable and heavily polluting resource. In a 1986 EPA report on solid waste, the polystyrene manufacturing process was named the fifth largest creator of hazardous waste. The process of making polystyrene pollutes the air and creates large amounts of liquid and solid waste. In addition, polystyrene food packaging constitutes a great source of litter for the City and contributes to the total amount of waste entering the Harbor. These items can take several decades to hundreds of years to deteriorate.

The Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education found that toxic chemicals leach out of polystyrene containers into food, especially when heated in a microwave. National Institute of Health has stated that Styrene has been “reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen.” *Report on Carcinogens*, p 383, Twelfth Edition (2011).

Many cities have already banned the use of polystyrene as well as many fast food chains. The prohibition of polystyrene benefits not only citizens’ health but the environment as well.

This bill does not define “polystyrene products” and it is not a defined term in the current Health Code. A definition should be added to the proposed legislation. City Council bill 12-0104 advances the City’s interest in health, safety and welfare of its citizens and visitors. BCHD supports this bill.

cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor
Michelle Spencer, Chief of Staff, Department of Health
Patrick Chaulk, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health
Amy Samman, Legislative Director, Department of Health

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