



To Lead, Advocate, and Connect as the Voice of Business

Bill 32-20 - Solid Waste (Trash) - Waste Reduction/Source Reduction and Single-Use Straws - Requirements

OPPOSE

Bill 32-20 bans the distribution of single-use plastic straws by a food service business to customers except upon request. Further, it requires any straws that are distributed by a food service business to be reusable or compostable. The bill also allows the County Executive to pursue future waste reduction initiatives through the prohibition on the use or sale of non-sustainable materials or products, or through the required use of environmentally preferable products or materials.

The Chamber has appreciated the ability to work with the Department of Environmental Protection and many of the stakeholders involved in this legislation to work toward a compromise. Many of the local chambers and stakeholders have had productive conversations about cost, implementation strategies, etc. The Chamber's takeaway from these conversations have been the need for an education campaign, *not a ban*. For example, the Our Last Straw campaign had great success proactively working with businesses in Washington, DC; the Chamber would love to work on this initiative here in the County.

It should be noted that the County Council specifically carved out monies in the Public Health Emergency Grant for restaurants – understanding that they were one of the hardest hit industries in the COVID19 global pandemic. It does not matter when the bill takes effect as it sends the wrong message to pass a plastic straw ban bill while some restaurants have permanently closed, and other owners are scared they will lose their business.

The Chamber looks forward to working with the County and stakeholders on a proactive and positive education campaign. The Chamber agrees with the intent of the bill but now is not the time to pass a bill that targets an industry that is trying to navigate and survive this global pandemic.

The Chamber also has concerns with the portion of the bill that gives the County Executive the authority to adopt regulations that would prohibit the use of certain products or materials and require the use of environmentally preferable products. The County Executive should not be permitted to create regulations without input from the County Council.

For the aforementioned reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce must oppose Bill 32-20 at this time.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) accelerates the success of our members by advocating for increased business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and is proud to be a Montgomery County Green Certified Business.