



Re: HB2496

I write to you as not just an advocate for the environment who works every day on plastic pollution and litter in Fairfax County, but as the one environmental member of the Governor's Plastic Waste Prevention Advisory Committee that was convened to figure out ways to reduce plastic waste in Virginia. This group that been meeting the last two + years to figure out ways to reduce the amount of plastic waste and advise the General Assembly accordingly. ! Spoiler alert—it was simply groundwork for this bill—all about ways to prop up plastic brokers, plastic manufacturing, and ways to get \$ out of the commonwealth to do that and so, I am asking you to reconsider this bill to establish and fund what appears to be a committee of industry, poised to hand over a love letter stuffed with cash, to the plastics industry.

If Virginia Legislators are serious about plastic waste and beefing up recycling and creating a true circular economy of upcycling and not downcycling, they (you) would promote policies that reduce the amount of plastic waste, not encourage more plastic shipped into and trucked all over the commonwealth, and certainly not throw money at industries that have seen record profits (fossil fuel industry) all under the guise of “recycling.”

If Virginia Legislators are concerned about the state of our waterways are and how choked rivers and streams are with household plastic like water bottles, and plastic bags, and, polystyrene food containers, wrappers and other plastic pollution, not to mention the unknowns of health issues of microplastics in our drinking water, fish, wildlife, rain, and human bodies they would consider meeting with the environmentalists who do this work every day, without benefit of lobbyists, and with the benefit of science, and research.

We would tell you that making more plastic from plastic doesn't make less plastic, that making fuel from plastic doesn't promote using less plastic and that we have yet to find an “advanced recycling facility” in this country that is doing what it claims—take household recycling and food polystyrene and recycles it back into



beverage bottles and food containers. But, those facilities sure do have no problem taking states' money.

If you support this bill but you don't support the many other environmental bills that would reduce plastic pollution like bag bans, polystyrene bans, single use plastic bans, bottle deposit bills, then you're not for the environment—you're for the industry that is polluting the environment and you should just step up and say that. Do you know how we know that the industry isn't serious about the environmental aspects of recycling--because they send out lobbyists and member organizations to fight every single bill that would promote mechanical recycling, and reduce plastic pollution in the Commonwealth. If you support this bill and you don't support a bottle bill which is one of the best ways to capture clean, household plastic and send it for recycling which is something the plastic brokers have been clamoring for, then you're not supporting recycling, or the environment.

Look at who is supporting this bill under the banner of "The Coalition for Consumer Choice"

American Chemistry Council
American Recyclable Plastic Bag Alliance
Virginia Manufacturers Association
Plastics Industry Association
Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association
Virginia Retail Federation, Foodservice Packaging Institute
Virginia Food Industry Association
Virginia Wholesalers and Distributors Association
FIB
Hampton Roads Chamber
Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce
Prince William Chamber of Commerce
Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce.



and ask yourself—are these folks (who all represent industry, or cities and towns + industry/business as chambers of commerce, not consumers but ok) about the environment or about industry, If your answer is that they are about industry then write the bill to reflect that and let all those groups fund this, because the fact that no environmental groups find this bill to be of value as written should tell you that this bill, that this new grant making commission made up of people who will benefit from those grants is not about beefing up our failing solid waste system in order to clean up the Commonwealth. And, you know what, that's fine—these lobbyists and associations are looking after their own.

But, so are we. We would love to see and support some robust bills and commissions that truly work to tackle plastic litter and waste in Virginia instead of being a front for national plastic burning organizations pushing for plastic incinerators in every community (see bill SB1365)—over and over Virginia's environmentalists bring legislators information, science and research to support bills that would help our environment, that would help recycling, that would help the Bay, and yet over and over, those bills are scuttled in favor of these sorts of bills that only serve their plastic masters.

One of the “benefits” of being kept out of the process of lawmaking in Virginia is that we environmentalists can look at all the bills in the session and see how seemingly unrelated bills fit together like a puzzle, to create super environmental hazards in our communities (like this bill, plus the Senate bill 1365 mentioned above which would override localities' ordinances to allow for recycling centers and Material Recycling Facilities to build plastic to fuel incinerators—did you know that there are several landfill/MRFs/Recycling centers within a few miles of Manassas Battlefield National Park? Oh hi, Prince William Chamber of Commerce! I hope you're connecting the dots here.) and even though every session we are woefully ignored, we continue to show up and do the work.

So, if you do support this bill, clearly written without any input from the environmental community, but with a lot of input from the industries who will rake in the cash, despite the overwhelming evidence that it is just a boondoggle



and a sham and a pipeline of crisp dollar bills to the plastics and fossil fuel industry, I ask that you rename it to something that is more apt like “Plastic Promotion Cash In an Envelope to the Plastics Industry Without Even a Fiscal Impact Study Bill” take the word “recycle” out of it, and don’t bother to even sit an environmentalist on it. Because honestly, we have so much work to do, trying to clean up these messes.

Thanks

Jen

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The mission of Clean Fairfax is to encourage environmental stewardship and urban sustainability in Fairfax County, Virginia through education, programming, and community involvement.

Clean Fairfax works on litter prevention efforts, promotes community cleanups and supports reducing, reusing and recycling. It also serves as a clearing house for environmental information in Fairfax County (and beyond.)

Established in 1985, Clean Fairfax is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the pollution.