

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING MEASURES TO REDUCE THE OCCURRENCE OF PLASTIC BAGS IN THE REGION'S RIVERS AND STREAMS

WHEREAS, the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and their many tributaries are a vital recreational resource for the region and a key contributor to the region's quality of life; and

WHEREAS, this resource is degraded by the many forms of trash that float on the surface and collect on the shorelines of these rivers and streams and surveys indicate that disposable plastic bags are a significant component of such pollution; and

WHEREAS, through Resolutions R77-07, R15-06 and R43-05, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) has affirmed its support for meeting the goal of a Trash Free Potomac by 2013; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia has taken action to impose a fee on major sources of such bags and will use the fees collected to defray the cost of reusable bags and to support water restoration activities in the Anacostia River watershed; and

WHEREAS, a number of other initiatives aimed at curtailing plastic bag pollution have been launched in other cities and regions in recent years; and

WHEREAS, the COG Board passed Resolution R19-09, directing the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (Committee) to survey the effectiveness of measures taken elsewhere to reduce the incidence of such pollution, to review data on the incidence of such pollution locally and to analyze the effectiveness of existing local recycling programs that address this issue; and

WHEREAS, the Committee has reviewed a report by COG staff addressing these issues and recommends that a regionally consistent approach for reducing plastic bag pollution be implemented.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

1. COG will include in its state legislative package support for initiatives in Maryland and Virginia designed to reduce the incidence of plastic bag pollution that are consistent with legislation enacted in the District of Columbia.
2. COG encourages its membership to include the issue of plastic bag pollution in citizen outreach efforts, to include diverse communities, focused on use of reusable bags and recycling of plastic bags. COG's Recycling Committee is directed to facilitate exchange of best practices among the COG membership.
3. COG directs the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee to continue to track the effectiveness of plastic bag initiatives in the United States as well as internationally, and to report back to the Board as appropriate.

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Nicole Hange, Board Clerk