



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

October 5, 2020

On behalf of the Restaurant Association of Maryland, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, and the thousands of employers and employees our organizations represent, we jointly **oppose Bill 32-20, Solid Waste (Trash) Waste Reduction/Source Reduction and Single-Use Straws – Requirements at this time.**

Bill 32-20 has the following main components: establishes a program, criteria, and methods for waste reduction/source reduction in Montgomery County; prohibits the distribution of single-use straws except in certain circumstances; and provides for education relating to straws.

Our organizations have appreciated the conversations with the Department of Environmental Protection and the stakeholders involved in this legislation to work toward a compromise. Our takeaway from these conversations has been the need for an education campaign. For example, the Our Last Straw campaign had great success proactively working with businesses in Washington, DC; we welcome the opportunity to support a similar campaign in Montgomery 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. The Council should not act on this legislation because of the bad timing, notwithstanding the bill's delayed effective date.

While it is our hope that the legislation does not move forward at this time, if the Transportation and Environment Committee does wish to act on the bill, we respectfully request two amendments:

- **Regulations versus Legislation** – under Section 48-61, Bill 32-20 permits the County Executive to adopt regulations for waste reduction in the County and completely bypass the need for any legislation. We request this section be removed entirely.
- **Specified Exemptions** – we accept the intent to amend the bill to restrict restaurants to providing straws ONLY upon customer request; however, amendments are needed to ensure that such a restriction does not apply to self-serve straw dispensers, carryout, delivery or drive-thru sales.

For the aforementioned reasons, our organizations respectfully oppose Bill 32-20, specifically at this time.