

Anne Arundel County passes Styrofoam Ban

Update: The Bill was vetoed by the County Executive.

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On June 18, 2018 the Anne Arundel County Council voted to ban the use of expanded polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam) takeout containers. The South River Federation appeared twice before the council in support of the ban alongside other partners. We discussed our Crab Creek trash trap, and the thousands of pieces of Styrofoam we have pulled out of it in the year since it was built.

With this move, Anne Arundel County joins Prince George's County, Montgomery County, Washington D.C., and Baltimore City in banning this harmful single-use plastic. Starting on January 1, 2020, restaurants will no longer be able to serve food or drinks in Styrofoam containers, or face a fine. The legislation was sponsored by Councilmen Trumbauer, Grasso and Pruski. Councilman Smith joined the sponsors to see the bill passed. Councilmen Walker, Fink and Peroutka voted nay. The County Executive's office also sent three \$100k+ staffers to oppose the legislation.

Anne Arundel County's Worsening Waters

This victory for the environment comes right on the heels of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's annual report card for 2017, showing that only 7 rivers in the Bay have deteriorating water quality. Four of those rivers have watersheds located entirely within Anne Arundel County: the Magothy, the Severn, the South, and the West & Rhode. Two



more border the County: the Patapsco and the Patuxent. The only deteriorating river not directly impacted by Anne Arundel County land use is the York.

The Federation is cheered to have helped pass the foam ban and take Anne Arundel County a small step closer to improving the health of its rivers, but clearly more needs to be done when Anne Arundel County is a hotspot of deteriorating water quality. The Federation and our allies in the fight for clean water work hard to curtail this deterioration, but we need more help from our elected officials. Consider the following facts:

- Environmental violations in the County receive penalties only 25% of the time.
- Critical Area Act variance requests in the County are granted 89% of the time.
- Modifications to County code requirements for development are granted 98% of the time.

These figures are discretionary actions taken by our County government that clearly favor development over our common natural resources. It is past time to hold the people making these decisions accountable. In November we have an election where these issues should be front and center. Please keep these facts in mind when choosing your candidate.