Plastic Bag Policy

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The 2011 United Kingdom Environment Agency Study


- The “...study... assesses the life cycle environmental impacts of the production, use and disposal of different carrier bags for the UK in 2006.”
The 2011 United Kingdom Environment Agency Study

- The first finding of the Executive Summary of the study asserts that “The environmental impact of all types of carrier bag is dominated by resource use and production stages. Transport, secondary packaging and end-of-life management generally have a minimal influence on their performance.”

- Much of the U.S. study is focused on end-of-life management, even though it typically has a “minimal influence” on plastic bag performance.
The second finding of the study states that “Whatever type of bag is used, the key to reducing the impacts is to reuse it as many times as possible and where reuse for shopping is not practicable, other reuse, e.g., to replace bin liners, is beneficial.”

The study further notes that “Overall it was estimated that 76 percent of single use carrier bags were reused” (emphasis added).” Referencing the WRAP 2005 study, 14 separate categories of reuses, including use as bin liners, were specified.
Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Law, 2008
Title 27-2701-2707

- New York State’s Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act

- It is a new statewide law that requires certain retail and grocery stores to set up a plastic bag recycling program for customers to return plastic bags for recycling. The law goes into effect on January 1, 2009.

- The law requires stores with 10,000 square feet or more of retail space and chains of five or more stores with greater than 5,000 square feet of retail space, and which provide plastic carryout bags to its customers as a result of a product sale, to:
➢ Establish an at-store plastic bag recycling program. Stores must make collection bins for plastic bag recycling available to customers in a visible, easily accessible location. NOTE: There are slightly different requirements pertaining to enclosed malls which differ from free-standing stores and strip malls.

➢ Ensure that collected plastics are recycled. Stores are required to recycle the plastic bags collected and are prohibited from disposing of the collected plastics as solid waste.

➢ Label all plastic bags. Any bags distributed in affected stores must state “Please Return to a Participating Store for Recycling” or a similar message approved by the DEC. The message required pursuant to New York City Local Law 1 of 2008 related to plastic carryout bag recycling is an acceptable message which stores may use without seeking specific approval from DEC.
Keep records on their program. Stores, or their agents, are required to maintain records describing the collection, transport and recycling of plastic bags for at least three years. The records must include the weight of plastics collected and their ultimate disposition (e.g., where they were recycled).

Sell reusable bags. Stores are required to allow the use of reusable shopping bags and make them available to their customers for purchase.

In 2014, with the support of the State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York League of Conservation Voters, the law was expanded to include plastic film.
Recycling Bin
Bags to Boards
Recycling
Environmentally Sustainable Solutions for Grocery Stores

Every year, our members recycle tons of plastic film, plastic bags and hard plastic, waxed and unwaxed corrugated cardboard, metal, fat and bones from beef, pork and chicken trimmings as well as cooking oil.

- Our members also recycle millions of beverage containers every year under the Bottle Law.
Price Chopper/Market 32 recycled 1,056 tons of plastic last year and Tops Markets recycled 577 tons in 2016.
From January 2014 through December 2015, our downstate members recycled approximately 16,773 tons of commingled plastic bags, film and wrap.
Municipal Activity

- Bans have been enacted in the:
  - Village of Southampton (April 2011)
  - Village of Easthampton (July 2011)
  - City of Rye (December 2011)
  - Village of Mamaroneck (July 2012)
  - Village of Larchmont (March 2013)
  - Village of Hastings-on Hudson (June 2014)
  - Village of New Paltz (November 2014)
  - Town of East Hampton (December 2014)
  - Town of Southampton (December 2014)
  - Village of Sag Harbor (April 2015)
  - Village of Patchogue (June 2015)
  - Town of New Castle (June 2016)

- Fee laws have been enacted in the:
  - New York City (Moratorium until January 2018)
  - Suffolk County (Effective on January 1, 2018)
  - City of Long Beach (Effective March 22, 2017)
  - Pending County Activity
    - Warren County
    - Madison County
Plastic bag regulation should not lead to a surge in paper, rather than reusable, bag use. This is because increased paper bag use would harm the environment.

For example, paper bags biodegrade into methane.

According to a July 2013 briefing note from the British Columbia Environment Ministry staff, methane emissions are particularly problematic since they have a global warming impact 21 times higher than carbon dioxide.
Bag Costs

- 1.5 cents vs. 5 cents
Level Playing Field
Local Fee Laws

- Suffolk County, New York City and City of Long Beach
- 5 cents on Paper and Plastic
Effective January 1, 2018 Suffolk County law will require stores to charge customers a minimum fee of 5¢ on carryout bags that are provided at retail stores.

The purpose of this law is to encourage consumers to use their own reusable bags for shopping.

**Stores that are covered under this law:**
- Drug stores
- Grocery stores
- Home centers
- Stationery stores
- Retail stores
- Food service in grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores or food marts.

**Stores that are not covered under this law:**
- Food service establishments, such as restaurants that are located outside of grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores or food marts.

**Bags that require a 5¢ fee:**
All bags provided to customers at the point of sale used to carry goods from the store to home.

**Bags that do not require a 5¢ fee:**
A bag without handles used to carry produce, meats, poultry, fish, dairy, dry goods, and any other non-prepackaged food items to the point of sale, a bag to carry pharmacy prescriptions, or a garment bag.
Effective January 1, 2018 Suffolk County local law will require stores to charge customers a minimum fee of 5¢ on carryout bags that are provided at retail stores.

**Which stores are covered under this law:**
- Supermarkets
- Grocery stores
- Convenience stores
- Home centers
- Stationery stores
- Food service in grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores or food marts

**Which stores are not covered under this law:**
- Food service establishments, such as restaurants located outside of grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores or food marts

**Bags that require a 5¢ fee:**
All bags provided to customers at the point of sale used to carry goods from the store to home.

**Bags that do not require a 5¢ fee:**
A bag without handles used to carry produce, meats, poultry, fish, dairy, dry goods, and any other non-prepackaged food items to the point of sale, a bag to carry pharmacy prescriptions, a garment bag, or any other bag exempted from the provisions of this local law.

The purpose of this law is to encourage consumers to use their own reusable bags for shopping.
TIPS FOR CLEANING REUSABLE BAGS

1. Canvas bags
   These are, by far, the easiest to clean. Just toss them in the washing machine and launder in hot water with detergent. Then, run them through the dryer.

2. Recycled shopping bags
   You should wash anything made from recycled plastic containers (a.k.a. polypropylene bags) by hand in warm soapy water and line dry it. Don't forget about the inner and outer seams, where food and liquid can hide and collect.

3. Insulated shopping bags
   Since you’re probably transporting raw meat in these bags, wipe them with a disinfecting wipe after each use.

4. Nylon bags
   Flip them inside out and wash them by hand in warm soapy water. If you prefer to machine wash them, use the gentlest cycle to prevent the bag from coming apart. Then, allow them to air dry.

5. Use different bags for different items:
   Designate certain bags for different items such as raw meat, seafood, and cleaning supplies. Label bags to avoid confusion.

6. Storing Bags:
   Prevent musty odors from developing by making sure bags are completely dry before storing them and using them.

REMEMBER YOUR BAGS

EVERY TIME YOU SHOP

• Store reusable bags in the car and at work.
  Many shopping trips are unplanned and unexpected. Be prepared by keeping reusable bags handy and accessible.

• Get reusable bags with a clip. You can clip your reusable bags to key chains, belt loops, purse straps, dog leashes, shopping carts, and stroller handles — anything to make sure they're there when you need them.

• Hang your bags on your doorknob, and you’ll be sure to remember your reusable bag on the way out of the house.

• In the checkout line and forget your bag? No problem. If you have just a few items, “Go Bagless!” If you have more, just load all of your groceries back into the cart, and bag them once you get to your car. If you forgot your bags completely, you can always load your unbagged groceries into the car and retrieve your bags once you get home to carry them inside. You’ll be sure to remember them the next time!

BRING A BAG

SAVE FIVE

KEEP THE EARTH ALIVE!

Steven Belfine
County Executive

James L. Tomsick, MD.
MPH, MBA, MD
Commissioner

Facebook.com/SuffolkCountyHealthServices
Twitter.com/SuffCoHealth
FIA Does Not Oppose Fee Laws on Paper and Plastic Bags

➢ We have opposed plastic bag bans to date, in part because of reliance on uncorroborated claims in adopting bans, rather than SEQRA compliant study.

➢ For example, ban proponents assert that plastic bags have caused a litter problem large enough to justify a ban. However, according to the 2009 National Litter Survey of Keep America Beautiful, a leading national nonprofit, plastic bags of all types comprise only 0.6 percent of litter.

➢ A minimum fee of 5 cents on plastic and paper bags would significantly reduce plastic bag use and avoid a shift to paper bags.
Governor Cuomo Announces Launch of Statewide Plastic Bag Task Force