

CITIZENS
CAMPAIGN



Reducing Plastic Bag Use in NY

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Environment

Legislation

Three main types of legislation in this region.

1. Banning Plastic Bags – many NY municipalities, including Southampton, East Hampton, Patchogue, Rye, Mamaroneck, Larchmont, Hastings-on-Hudson, and New Paltz.



Legislation

2. Banning plastic and placing a fee on paper bags. An improvement on just banning thin plastic bags. New Castle, NY was the first municipality to pass this type of bill, modeled on successful California models.

Examples:

Los Angeles had a 94% decrease in single-use bag use, including a 25% decrease in paper bags.

San Jose reduced plastic bag litter by 89% in the storm drain system, 60% in the creeks and rivers, and 59% in city streets and neighborhoods.

California just became the 2nd state in the nation to pass state-wide plastic bag legislation. A ballot referendum passed this November will ban plastic bags and place a 10 cent fee on paper.

Legislation

3. Fee on both plastic and paper bags.
 - Longport, NJ – 10 cent fee passed Nov., 2015
 - NYC – 5 cent fee passed May, 2016.
 - Suffolk County, NY – 5 cent fee passed Sept., 2016
 - Long Beach, NY – 5 cent fee passed Oct., 2016



Disposable Bag Fees

This type of legislation has been gaining ground – educates consumers on the hidden costs of single-use bags and allows them to make informed decisions.

Example: NYC

- Uses 5.2 billion carry-out bags per year.
- Plastic bags generate 1,700 tons of waste per week, and it takes \$12.5m per year to transport those bags to landfills.
- Clogs storm drains, causing localized flooding.
- Plastic bags become ocean pollution, kill wildlife, and litter communities.
- Plastic bags clog recycling machines, costing recyclers time and money.

Disposable Bag Fees

- Washington DC went from 22 million disposable bags to 3 million the first month their 5 cent fee was enacted. Overall approx. 60% decrease in single-use bag use.
- UK achieved an 85% reduction in the first 6 months since their 5p charge implemented.
- Ireland, a world leader in plastic bag reduction since passing their fee in 2002, has seen a 95% reduction in disposable bag use.

Based on these models, we expect to see a 60-90% decrease in disposable bag use in NYC, Suffolk, Longport, and Long Beach.

Implementation & Education

- NYC – Was set to go into effect Feb 15, 2017. Nonprofits, City Council members, and DSNY conducted outreach.
- Long Beach – groups have conducted extensive outreach to stores, who were largely supportive of bill, and conducted a public campaign leading up to implementation on Earth Day, 2017.
- Suffolk County – In January, the county convened a task force with retailers, local agencies, and environmental groups to create an outreach plan for implementation & plan for tracking success of the fee.

Outreach includes reusable bag give-aways, signage for retailers, and public events encourage people to BYOBag.

State Laws

- NYS bill was introduced last spring to preempt cities from implementing fees on single-use bags. This year, NYS passed a moratorium on NYC enacting their plastic bag fee.
 - In January, 2018 NYC can reintroduce and pass their bag fee.
- Governor Cuomo announced a task force when signing the moratorium – Task Force will come up with legislation that tackles plastic pollution by the end of this year.



State Law

- Some Reasons NYS lawmakers decided to interfere with NYC's bag law:
 - Impact on low income NYers
 - NYS plastic bag recycling law
 - Fee going to retailers (want some to go to the state)
 - Why not a ban?



State Preemption Laws

States preemption legislation is a growing national issue: bills introduced/passed in Texas, Michigan, Arizona, Wisconsin, Indiana, Idaho, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Minnesota.

NY moratorium bill preempted NYC from enacting their bill. It is critical that:

Rights of municipalities to enact plastic reduction legislation are upheld.

Municipalities pass model legislation that we know will successfully reduce single-use bag use.