

Support a Ban on Plastic & Fee on Single-Use Bags

Contact Your Councilmember to Urge Support for this Bill

Banning Plastic and Placing a Fee on Single Use Bags Will Reduce Pollution

- Business will no longer be able to give customers a free bag at checkout.
- Plastic bags will be banned.
- Businesses will charge a 5 cent fee for other single use bags. The business will keep 1 cent of the fee; the City 4 cents.
- Bag legislation has been proven to be an effective means for reducing bag litter.
- Eliminating plastic bags and reducing other single-use bags puts us one step closer to cleaner and healthier communities and waterways.

POLLUTION RISK

Plastic bags are ubiquitous, insidious litter strewn along our highways, clogging storm drains and hanging from trees. They end up in creeks and streams, where the current carries them down rivers, into the Chesapeake Bay and ultimately the ocean. Wildlife mistake them for food.

LOW RECYCLING RATES

Only one percent of plastic bags are recycled according to Waste Management. The rest end up in landfills, are incinerated, or as litter. Plastic bags mistakenly disposed of in curbside recycling bins end up clogging recycling machinery, which costs municipal recycling processors money.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Plastic bags are made of petroleum, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions through extraction, manufacture, transport, use and disposal. By 2050, the greenhouse gas emissions from plastic could reach over 56 gigatons—10-13% of the entire remaining carbon budget (CIEL).



Why Support this Bill?

- Putting a fee on single-use bags increases the use of reusable bags.
- Since May 2014, Mr. Trash Wheel has collected 431,057 plastic grocery bags; that's roughly 260 bags per day.
- An average American uses 10 plastic bags per week or 520 per year; requiring the same petroleum that it takes to drive 60 miles according to the Center for Biological Diversity.
- Reducing litter leads to healthier communities. People living near vacant land that had been cleared of trash and restored reported increased feeling of safety, decreased perception of violence, and more opportunities to socialize with their neighbors, according to research by the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health. The same research team found that reducing blight lowers depression.
- In Maryland, Montgomery County has charged a five cent fee for all single-use bags since 2011. Chestertown banned plastic bags in 2012 followed by Takoma Park in 2016, and Westminster in 2019.

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How has a Bag Ban and Fee worked in other jurisdictions?

- Part of the bag fee is returned to the local government to fund litter mitigation, water protection programs, and distribution of reusable bags to residents.
- The District of Columbia saw a 72 percent reduction in plastic bag litter in the four years after instituting a 5 cent plastic bag fee according to the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

Who will be affected by the proposed bill?

- Almost all businesses that provide bags for purchases or take-out in Baltimore City will be affected.

What other products can I use?

- There are various alternatives available such as paper bags made from recycled content, or compostable plastic bags, along with reusable bags of different materials.
- Retailers can give their customers a credit for bringing their own bags.
- Most companies that provide plastic bags offer other types of bags.

What does the bill not apply to?

- Bags for dry cleaning, newspapers, or prescription drugs are exempted.
- Bags used to package fresh meat and seafood, produce, or unpackaged nuts and grains.
- Baked goods or confections.
- Items purchased at farmers markets.
- Customers using WIC benefits are exempt from the bag fee.

