

Please vote NO to ban the plastic bags! It's absurd to assume or think that garbage waste and pollution are directly linked to the very usable and functional, multi-use plastic bag. I'm including here in this note to you a copy of a letter I wrote to the editor of the Petersburg Pilot in September 2018 regarding this very thing. Please consider very carefully my points spelled out here:

It's not about the bag. I was dismayed to hear on the news this week that Petersburg is following in the steps of too many other cities by prohibiting the use of the common plastic grocery bag and will instead "encourage" the use of reusable shopping bags.

Let's think about it with a few examples. Plastic grocery bags are pure genius as they indeed can be used over and over (think recycling). How many of you have had children/grand children who end up with wet boots –put the dry plastic grocery bag over his/her foot and voila! You can send your child out the door without his having to endure the discomfort of wet boots until they can be dried out. On commercial fishing boats, the plastic grocery sack is included in many survival suit storage bags: in an emergency with need of donning the suit critical to one's survival, it is the plastic grocery bag that allows one to insert his/her foot into the plastic grocery bag before inserting his/her foot into the suit's booties without resistance. Its functionality around the house is noted in various ways: garbage can liners, storage of shoes, clothes and other items for either donation to a local charity or storage for use at another time.

You take Fido out for his morning constitutional and bring along the plastic grocery bag because you are a responsible dog owner and will clean up after Fido. Get rid of the plastic grocery bag – then what? I'll guarantee there will be a LOT more of Fido's deposits left along the sidewalks and pathways in and around Petersburg.

Most years, SE Alaska is soaking wet much of the time. A plastic grocery bag keeps the groceries dry, the gym clothes dry, the mail from the post office dry when one is on foot or traveling by bicycle. It even keeps the bicycle seat dry during inclement weather!

Doing away (or penalizing for its use) with a completely functional item on the argument that it will cut down on litter or that it will not make an impact in landfills is absurd. Back to my original statement: It's NOT about the bag. It's about personal responsibility, it's about respect for one's town and surroundings to not litter or be wantonly wasteful. Guaranteed, these new "reusable" shopping bags will every bit be the litter that the current plastic bags are.

I went for a 3 mile walk yesterday and took note of the garbage I saw along the roadside, beach and bike path. Here's a summary of what I saw in the way of garbage tossed by irresponsible people: 1 plastic grocery bag, an energy drink can, a water bottle, a plastic top from a 'disposable' coffee cup, several wrappers of varying sorts and dozens of cigarette butts. And you want to go after the plastic grocery sack?? If you ban plastic grocery bags, you'd better

ban all the above things as well as the clam-shell food containers; the net/twine/line from fishermen; the washers, dryers and refrigerators dumped out the road and the list goes on.

Instead, keep the traditional plastic grocery sack – without extra charge – and for those who wish to use a different kind of plastic sack, those people can bring their reusable shopping bags; and for yet another solution, the old fashioned brown paper sack. But teach and demonstrate personal responsibility every single day – that’s where the solution really lies.

Respectfully,

Donna Marsh, Alaskan resident for over 30 years

PO Box 1421
Petersburg, AK 99833