

HB 264

SHOPPING BAG REGULATION



Motivations

Plastic doesn't belong in nature.

- Plastic pollution is detrimental to our environment & wildlife
- Unsightly—for residents & visitors
 - People come here for a wilderness experience
 - Do we want tourists leaving with the impression that we don't care about our wild spaces?

We're trying to encourage people to be mindful of their behavior (consumption) and its effects on their community, environment, health, and economy.

Sturdy & Stylish

You can't carry your Alaska Grown dog in a single-use plastic bag!



Photo Source: Eyak Preservation Council, who made cloth bags for all the residents of Cordova

Animals struggle to differentiate plastic from food (many bags probably once carried food, and likely smell delicious)



Curiosity killed the...caribou
(below video is from the Mat-Su)



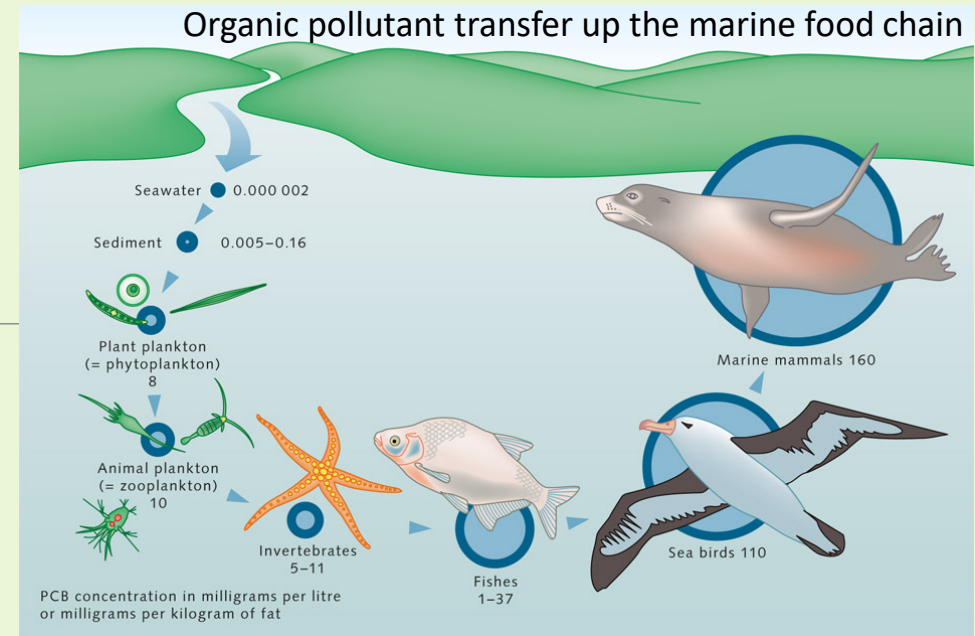
being found inside moose, caribou,

Why Plastic Bags?

- A major plastic offender
 - People overuse plastic bags – they're free and readily accessible
 - So flimsy and delicate that one bag is often not enough – anything with corners, must double-bag it!
 - Light and easily carried by the wind...and Alaska has some serious winds
- So easy to substitute
 - Cloth bags make a much better replacement – sturdy, washable, even stylish
 - Even thick plastic bags don't end up in the environment on a comparable scale to thin single-use bags

Quick Perspective Break

- Plastic does not degrade; it breaks into smaller and smaller pieces
- Bits of plastic are like magnets to pollutants (...PCBs, for example)
- These tiny plastic bits, covered in toxins, enter the ecosystem & work their way into the food chain
- Fat-soluble toxins (again, think PCBs) accumulate in animal tissues, and toxins accumulate exponentially as you move up the food chain
- We Alaskans love our **delicious** rich-in-fat salmon...
- *Plastic pollution has far-reaching effects that impact human health as well as the environment & economy*



Why Not Start with a Ban?

- This was a tough call; bans are more common (and they get right to the point).
- Our rationale:
 - We wanted people to have the choice...give folks a chance to get used to the idea – changing behaviors takes time
 - The state is in need of revenue
 - A fee is still effective in reducing plastic bag use
- Stores already subsidize disposable bag costs by charging more for goods purchased
 - Estimated hidden bag costs = \$25-50 per person per year -- bags aren't as free as they seem

Fun Fact

There has been plastic in the tree outside my office window—right in front of our capitol, overlooked by William Henry Seward—since the 4th special session last November.



Seward casts a judgmental gaze on our litter.





Mat-Su: motivation for a bag ban

This poor little fella is about to have a very bad day



The Committee Substitute

- Bans single-use plastic bags under 4 mils thick
 - About the thickness of plastic sheeting
- Establishes minimum \$0.10 fee for all other bags (paper/reusable)
 - Stores keep this fee—its only purpose is to prevent giveaway of thick plastic bags (i.e., working around the rule)
- Removes recycling requirement (moot if there's a ban)
- Exempts stores under \$250,000 gross sales

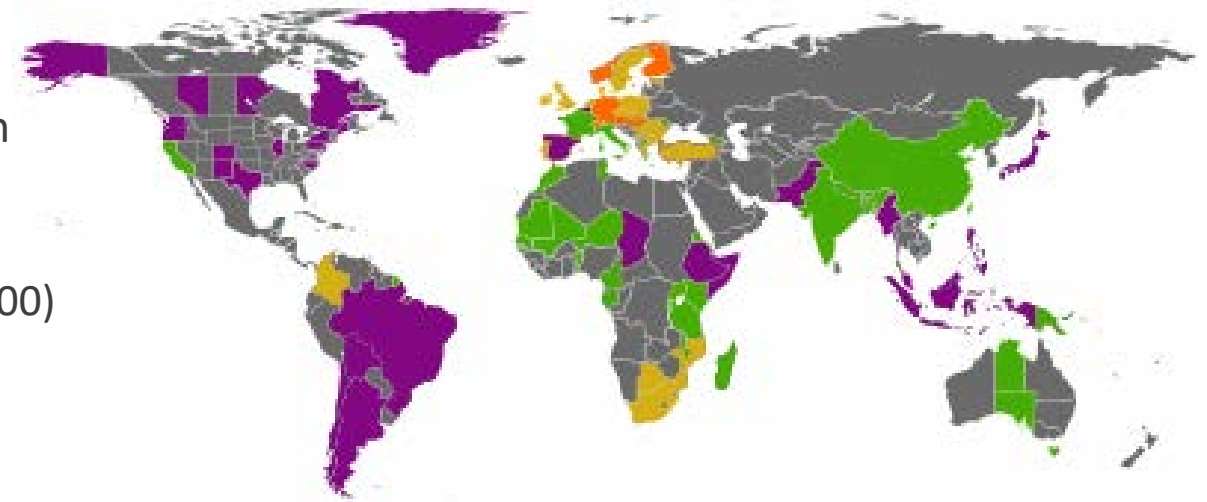
Peer Pressure

GLOBAL

- More than 40 countries have a plastic bag ban
 - Bangladesh was the first (in 2002)
 - Kenya has strictest ban (violators get up to 4 years in prison and fines from \$19,000-\$38,000)

UNITED STATES

- 13 US cities in **7 states** have fee
- 110 US cities in **18 states** have ban
- The most common legislation across the US involves a **ban on plastic bags** with a **fee for paper & reusable** bags



- Plastic bags banned
- A tax on some plastic bags
- Voluntary tax agreement
- Partial tax or ban (municipal/regional)

Peer Pressure – Lower 49

States with Bans		States with Fees
Arizona (1)	Massachusetts (42)	Colorado (4)
California*	Minnesota (1)	District of Columbia (1)
Colorado (5)	New York (12)	Maine (3)
Connecticut (1)	New Mexico (2)	Maryland (1)
Hawaii (5)	Oregon (3)	New Jersey (1)
Illinois (2)	Rhode Island (1)	New York (1)
Iowa (1)	Texas (9)	Texas (2)
Maine (3)	Washington (16)	
Maryland (1)		

*Ban is statewide

() = number of boroughs/cities involved



- Official ban
- Unofficial ban
- Ban in the works



Alaska

- 17 communities in Alaska no longer allow plastic bags
- Palmer, Denali Borough, & Unalaska are also considering plastic bag ban

Bag Bans			
Arctic Village*	Denali	Kodiak	Palmer
Bethel	Emmonak	Kotlik	St. Paul Island*
Chefnak*	Fort Yukon	Koyuk	Unalaska
Chevak*	Galena	New Stuyahok*	Tanana
Cordova	Hooper Bay	Newtok*	Wasilla

*No resolution/ordinance: community voluntarily stopped using plastic bags out of concern for environmental health

The Resource(ful) State

Chefornak	Community purchased canvas bags for the local store to use
Chevak	Took used plastic bags & crocheted them into reusable plastic bags
Cordova	Eyak preservation Council ran Go Fund Me effort to raise funds to give a cloth bag bearing their logo to every resident
Denali Borough	Partnered with Subaru to distribute reusable bags
Koyuk	Received Alaska Conservation grant to provide two canvas bags to each household
Wasilla	Working with local youth groups (e.g. scouts) to sell cloth bags instead of candy



HB 264

A WHIRLWIND TOUR

Section 1

Adds “Article 5: Disposable Shopping Bag Fees” to 43.98 (Revenue & Taxation, Misc Provisions)

- Establishes a \$0.20 fee for single-use, carry-out plastic bags
- Lists exceptions (e.g., bags for bulk food, ice, newspaper)
- Works around any municipal regulations to prevent compounding fees
 - State fees are not in addition to muni fees
- Provides instructions for retail seller
 - Display fees on receipt
 - May not reimburse fee (or otherwise work around the rule)
 - Maintain & file records with Revenue
- Explains penalties for violation (\$250, \$500, \$750 within a year)
 - DOR deals with violations
- Defines terms (“disposable shopping bag”, “retail seller”, reusable bag”)

Section 2

Amends 46.06 (Water, Air, Energy & Environmental Conservation, Recycling & Reduction of Litter)

- Establishes a recycling requirement
 - Retailers must accept plastic bags for the purpose of recycling
- Stipulates that plastic bags must show recycling symbol
- Requires that reusable bags must be made available (obviously visible!) for purchase near checkout
- Outlines fees for violation of the above (\$250, \$500, \$750 within a year)
 - DEC deals with violations
- Defines terms (“disposable shopping bag”, “retail seller”, “reusable bag”) per Section 1

Section 3

Provides an effective date of January 1, 2019



The Committee Substitute

Section 1: Adds new section to AS 46.06, “Recycling & Reduction of Litter”

- Establishes a ban on single-use plastic bags
- Lists exceptions (e.g., bags for bulk food, ice, newspaper)
- Implements a minimum charge for all other bags (paper & reusable)
- Provides instructions for retail seller
 - Display price on receipt
 - May not reimburse fee (or otherwise work around the rule)
- Explains penalties for violation (\$250, \$500, \$750 within a year)
 - DOR deals with violations
- Defines terms (“disposable shopping bag”, “retail seller”, reusable bag”)

Section 2: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2019



PLASTIC BAGS

How convenience is killing our planet

THE PROBLEM

1 Trillion



Number of plastic bags produced worldwide in 1 year.

3012

1,000 Years

Time taken for 1 plastic bag to fully degrade.

3.5m Tonnes

Net weight of plastic bags discarded in a year.

THE IMPACT

100,000



Number of marine animals killed each year as a result of plastic bag pollution.

46,000



Number of plastic pieces found in every square mile of ocean.

4.3bn



Gallons of crude oil used each year in the production of plastic bags.

THE SOLUTION

Tax



A fee to consumers who use plastic bags. This has reduced plastic bag consumption in Ireland by 93.5%.

Reuse



Encourage a shift away from the 'use and toss' culture. Reusing plastic bags drastically cuts demand for new production.

Alternatives



Switch to reusable bags, such as Envirobag. Each reusable bag can eliminate thousands of plastic bags over a person's life.

THE BENEFITS

One ton of recycled plastic helps:



Save 685 Gallons of Oil



Save 5,774 KWH of Electricity



Save 98 Million BTU's of Energy



Save 30 Cubic Yards of Landfill Space



Reduce Air Pollution



Save Sea Creatures such as Birds, Fish and Dolphins