

I am Carol Montgomery from Palmer AK and I am the chair of the Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition Plastic Bag Committee.

I applaud Rep Josephson, and Drummond for sponsoring HB 264 and the members of this Committee for considering this legislation to reduce the harmful effects of plastic.

I would like to suggest two changes or amendments to this legislation. First would be to ban disposable bags to make HB 264 consistent with the growing number of local plastic bag laws in AK, and second, to apply the 20 cent fee to all remaining carry out bags including the “reusable” ones.

I will try to keep my comments brief, but bag laws get complicated, so bear with me.

First let me explain why this legislation should ban the disposable bags rather than charge for them. As HB 264 is now written, consumers will have a choice. They can pay a 20 cent fee for a flimsy disposable bag or accept a thicker “reusable” plastic bag which is exempt from the fee, and stores generally offer them at no charge. Faced with this choice, I think it goes without saying that consumers will choose free reusable bags. Why would anyone pay 20 cents for a flimsy bag when they can get a nicer one for free? So this legislation will, in effect, eliminate disposable bags from the marketplace, acting as a de facto ban. There is a groundswell of local support to ban disposable bags. Hooper Bay, Bethel, Cordova, Wasilla, and Kodiak have all passed legislation banning them. Amending this legislation to ban disposable bags rather than charging a fee for them makes HB 264 consistent with and supportive of existing local laws. I believe this will reduce confusion.

The fee part of this legislation is critical, but it would be more effective if it were applied to the bags that will be used to replace the disposable ones. As it is written, HB 264 charges for the disposable bags but offers a free pass on the “reusable” plastic bags. A common misconception is that reusable bags get reused. By definition

“reusable” bags include plastic bags that are thicker than 2.25 mil, which makes them less flimsy, so that they can hold more weight and be used multiple times. These slightly thicker bags are the cheapest alternative for retailers to replace disposable bags. When Chicago, California, and Hawaii, for example, passed their first bag bans, these so-called reusable bags simply replaced the disposable ones and were offered for free to customers every time they went through the check out line. There was no incentive for customers to reuse the bags, or reduce their use. Even though the bags were reusable, consumers treated them as disposable and added even more plastic to the waste stream. Chicago, Honolulu and California all had to go back and modify the original plastic ban legislation to add a fee for the so called reusable bags.

Major retailers want a bag fee to accompany any ban on plastic. I have spoken with corporate representatives from Walmart, FM/Kroeger, Carrs/Safeway, and others. While their position is to support whatever bag legislation the community wants, they ask that any plastic bag ban include a mandated fee for the bags that will be used to replace them. They have 2 reasons for this. First, these bags, are more expensive, and will raise costs. Retailers are reluctant to be the store that chooses to charge for “reusable” bags because it puts them at a competitive disadvantage. Second, they have also found that consumers treat these bags the same as the disposable ones, defeating the purpose of a ban.

By amending HB 264 to ban disposable bags and apply the 20 cent fee to all other carryout bags, this legislation will not only support the growing number of AK communities that have banned plastic bags, but it will close the loophole that allows retailers to undermine the purpose of the ban by giving out heavier plastic bags for free.

Thank you for listening and considering my comments.

From: mary dokken
To: [House Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: HB264
Date: Monday, February 12, 2018 5:16:20 PM

I am Mary Wilson from Wasilla, AK and I am the co-chair of the Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition Plastic Bag Committee.

You have heard from Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition Plastic Bag Committee, chair - Carol Montgomery of Palmer and so I won't repeat all the great points she made.

I too, would like to applaud Representative Josephson and Drummond for sponsoring HB264 and the members of this Committee for considering this legislation to reduce the wasteful use of plastic that has a life span of approximately 11 minutes before it is trash.

I think this is a great time to get the state on board since many of the smaller communities have passed legislation to ban bags. It is a big undertaking but look at California and Hawaii and they have succeeded.

I believe as a state we have an obligation to the many people living here. Tourism is a huge resource for Alaska. We don't want our tourist investing in beautiful train rides through pristine Alaska and as they get closer to the cities they see a whole different picture with plastic bags torn and shredded in the trees and stuck in fencing along the highways.

I also worry about our fishing industry. The fish population is decreasing and we need to do everything we can to keep the plastic pollution out of the waterways. I fear that one day we may not want to eat the salmon that I enjoy so much. There is plenty of information out about the microplastics and how they are being found in the fish.

This is only a small part of the plastic problem effecting our planet and we can't fix it over night but this is a beginning and something we all can do.

Thank you for your time,

Mary Wilson
Mat-Su Zero Waste Plastic Bag Committee - Co-Chair

From: Brad De Noble
To: [House Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: plastic bag legislation
Date: Monday, February 12, 2018 10:08:06 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am e-mailing to voice my support for HB 264 concerning plastic bags. Single-use plastic ultimately must be banned and this is a good start. Please support and pass Bill 264. Thank you.

Brad De Noble
Eagle River, AK

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From: Genny Rietze
To: [House Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: Support for Bill HB264
Date: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 8:38:26 AM

I am writing to support Michelle Putz's testimony this morning and to support the bag fee proposed in HB264.

Sweden instituted a bag tax and saw a 96% reduction in plastic bag use.

THIS IS THE FUTURE.

I am so proud to be an Alaskan with this bag tax proposal and I sincerely hope it passes. We can do this, together.

Genny Rietze
Haines, AK
lifelong Alaskan.



From: Harry Reitze
To: [House Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: Support for Bill HB264
Date: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 8:33:22 AM

Hi, I am writing in support for HB264.

Every major city in America is moving to a bag tax or ban...this is the future and does Alaska want to be a leader in sustainability and responsibility OR behind?

Thank you.

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Harry Rietze
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