

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

## **Sponsor Statement**

### **House Bill 81: An Act prohibiting disposable shopping bags; and providing for an effective date**

Single-use plastic bags are harmful to our environment, our wildlife, and our economy. Researchers have shown that wildlife, such as caribou and moose, will eat plastic bags, which cannot be digested and will ultimately kill the animal – typically through starvation. There have been countless cases of birds dying from ingesting plastic fragments found on beaches, including single-use plastic bags. Plastics in the ocean get broken down into microplastics, which are finding their way into our seafood, which then finds its way onto our plates – along with whatever chemicals are leaching out of the plastic. For a subsistence state, this is unacceptable.

Our resources should not be succumbing to plastic pollution and our residents should not have to worry about their health after enjoying a subsistence harvest.

Health and well-being aside, plastic bag pollution is detrimental to the aesthetic of our beautiful state. It is up to us as a state to stop needless pollution and change wasteful behavior. Alaskan communities are already stepping up and taking control; it's time the state follows suit.

HB 81 is an effort to reduce waste and pollution and protect our renewable resources. HB 81 is also a first step Alaska can take to be a responsible global environmental stakeholder and to protect already overstressed marine ecosystem of the North Pacific.

I encourage you to support this legislation and urge you to reach out to my office with any questions.