

April 4, 2019
Haines, Alaska
Re: Letter of support for HB81

Dear Representative Andrew Josephson,

We are writing in support of your proposed legislation, HB81, "An Act prohibiting disposable plastic shopping bags; and providing for an effective date." Your bill was submitted for its first hearing in the first committee of referral on April 4, 2019 and proposes to prohibit plastic retail bags throughout the state of Alaska. It is timely, given that states are increasingly aware of the crisis surrounding the use of single-use plastic of all kinds, particularly bags, and that New York has recently become the second U.S. state (after California) to ban such bags.

We are an ad hoc committee organizing community events in Haines, Alaska for Earth Day, 2019. We are Haines residents and members of non-profit groups such as Haines Friends of Recycling, Takshanuk Watershed Council, Lynn Canal Conservation, the Alaska Bald Eagle Foundation, and other interested individuals. Given our theme of "Plastic Pollution and Solutions," we were excited to find upon calling your office recently that your proposed bag ban legislation that stalled last year would be refiled last month. Our Earth Day forums will include presentations on plastic bag ban initiatives enacted in Alaska communities.

As you have stated, the deadly environmental risks of plastic in general and plastic bags specifically are well known: ingested plastic litter directly kills marine and terrestrial mammals, reptiles, and birds, and microplastics that are not filtered out of wastewater indirectly contaminate our food sources with bacteria and pollutants that concentrate up the food chain. Alaska is a state with lifestyles dependent on subsistence and commercial fisheries and on tourism; plastic bag pollution thus impacts our economy and our health at both macro and micro levels. As you so aptly put in your statement, "HB81 is an effort to reduce waste and pollution and protect our renewable resources. HB81 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."

Plastic bags are simply a habit that we can change. With HB81 enacted as statewide legislation, we have the power to limit plastic use for the benefit of all of Alaska, and to avoid the costs, inefficiencies, and delays of individual local initiatives.

We wholeheartedly support this legislation.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Haines ad hoc Earth Day Committee

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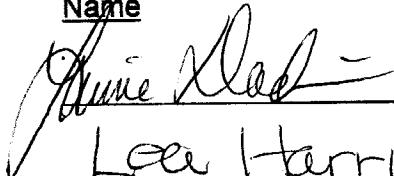
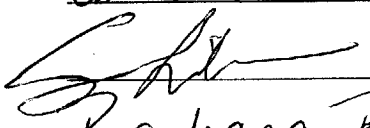
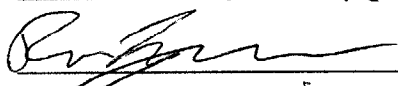
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