

HB

264

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264</SUBJECT><COMM>HL&C30</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 264: *"An Act relating to a fee for disposable shopping bags; relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; relating to the recycling of 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. Tourists come to Alaska to experience some of the most pristine wild places in America, not to see plastic-filled alders tarnishing our mountain-scapes.

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 264 is an effort to reduce waste and pollution, and protect our renewable resources. I invite you to discuss this issue with me further and urge you to support this legislation.

Please contact my staff, Lisa Delaney, with any questions: 465-4967, lisa.delaney@akleg.gov

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Summary of Changes from Version J to Version O

HB 264 - *"An Act relating to a fee for disposable shopping bags; relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; relating to the recycling of disposable shopping bags; and providing for an effective date."*

1. Applies an exemption to both the \$0.20 fee and recycling requirements for unincorporated communities and/or communities with populations of less than 5,500 people.
2. Removes the seasonal component from the retail seller definition, meaning that any business (even a seasonal one) that meets the other conditions listed in the definition must comply with the bag fee and recycling components.
3. Increases the minimum gross sales from \$100,000 to \$250,000, meaning that any business that makes more than \$250,000 in gross sales must comply with the bag fee and recycling components. Any business making less than this amount does not have to comply.
4. Increases the bag thickness requirement from 2.25 mil to 4 mil.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2018 Legislative Session

Bill Version:	CSHB 264(CRA)
Fiscal Note Number:	1
(H) Publish Date:	2/23/2018

Identifier: HB 264 DOR-TAX-1-28-18
 Title: SHOPPING BAG FEES & RECYCLING
 Sponsor: JOSEPHSON
 Requester: House Community & Regional Affairs

Department: Department of Revenue
 Appropriation: Taxation and Treasury
 Allocation: Tax Division
 OMB Component Number: 2476

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2019	Included in	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
	Appropriation Requested	Governor's FY2019 Request	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2019	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Personal Services	172.0		172.0	172.0	172.0	172.0	172.0
Travel	10.0		10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Services	40.0		40.0	40.0	40.0	40.0	40.0
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	222.0	0.0	222.0	222.0	222.0	222.0	222.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

1004 Gen Fund (UGF)	222.0		222.0	222.0	222.0	222.0	222.0
Total	222.0	0.0	222.0	222.0	222.0	222.0	222.0

Positions

Full-time	2.0		2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues

1250 UGF Rev (UGF)	1,650.0		3,300.0	3,300.0	3,300.0	3,300.0	3,300.0
Total	1,650.0	0.0	3,300.0	3,300.0	3,300.0	3,300.0	3,300.0

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2018) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2019) cost: 500.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? Yes
 If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? 01/01/19

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version/comments:

Initial version

Prepared By:	Brandon Spanos, Deputy Director	Phone:	(907)269-6736
Division:	Tax Division	Date:	01/26/2018 05:00 PM
Approved By:	Ken Alper, Director	Date:	01/27/18
Agency:	Tax Division		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Analysis

Bill Analysis

The bill establishes a fee of \$0.20 for each disposable shopping bag provided by a retailer, with reduction for any municipal levy. The fee would apply to any bag that is not "reusable" with a minimum lifetime of 75 uses. The fee would be itemized and listed as a line item on the sales receipt. The bill also requires retailers that provide disposable shopping bags to also provide a bag recycling location at the entrance to their store. The fee would be collected by the retailer. The retailer would remit 75% of the fee to the state and would retain 25% of the fee to help cover costs associated with recycling disposable bags. The fee would be effective January 1, 2019.

Revenue Estimate

Revenue from this bill is uncertain, as we do not have an accurate estimate of the fee base in Alaska, how consumer behavior will change in response to the fee, or the extent to which municipalities will impose their own fees.

One jurisdiction with a similarly structured fee to this bill is Montgomery County, MD which has a \$0.05 per bag fee applied to all retail establishments. In FY 2015, that fee was applied to 61.6 million qualifying bags for a county with just over 1 million people. Scaling this consumption to Alaska's population would yield a revenue estimate of \$6.5 million; however since our fee would be 4 times as high we believe this is an unrealistic revenue number because of the increased likelihood individuals will stop using disposable bags due to the higher fee in Alaska. Our revenue estimate assumes that Alaska consumption is half of Montgomery County's as a result of the higher fee, generating about \$3.3 million per year after deducting the retailer's 25 percent of the fee. This is before adjusting for any municipal levies. However, because of the ability for municipalities to claim this revenue with zero net fiscal impact, we expect that many municipalities will add a similar tax or fee, which could dramatically reduce state revenue from what is reflected in our estimate. Depending on how businesses and consumers respond to the fee, and the extent to which municipalities enact offsetting levies, revenue could be significantly higher or lower than our estimate.

Implementation Cost

This bill would create a new tax type to be administered by the Tax Division. According to the 2012 Economic Census, there are 2,508 retail trade establishments in the state, 983 full- and limited-service restaurants and eating establishments and 390 dry cleaning or laundry establishments. We anticipate that some of these establishments will not offer disposable shopping bags and therefore will not collect and remit the disposable shopping bag fee. If there are 3,000 taxpayers submitting returns, this would amount to 12,000 quarterly tax returns filed per year. This would be the second-largest tax type in Alaska in terms of number of returns filed (behind corporate income tax). After a period of time, it is possible that some establishments will stop offering disposable shopping bags entirely, reducing the number of taxpayers and quarterly returns.

We recently completed implementation of the Tax Revenue Management System (TRMS), which created an integrated online tax application used by both taxpayers and administrators for the 25 tax types currently administered by the Division. We expect to engage FAST enterprises, the TRMS contractor, to build a disposable shopping bag fee module into TRMS. This will require the mobilization of at least one additional FAST contractor to Alaska to develop the new module, and is the majority of the estimated cost within the \$500.0 capital request.

The Department would need to adopt regulations to implement this new fee, and the Division would plan to carry out a public outreach program in the second half of 2018. The cost for regulations and outreach will be paid from the capital request.

Ongoing costs for tax return processing, examination and audit will include two new employees, an auditor and tax technician. The Tax Division's fiscal note for a similar bill in 2008 stated it would require 5 new positions to administer. However, because of efficiencies gained through implementation of our TRMS system, we anticipate that we will be able

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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Sectional Analysis

HB 264 - "An Act relating to a fee for disposable shopping bags; relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; relating to the recycling of disposable shopping bags; and providing for an effective date."

Section 1: Adds a new section to AS 43.98—Article 5: Disposable Shopping Bag Fees.

AS.43.98.080(a) imposes a fee on single-use plastic bags.

AS.43.98.080(b) outlines plastic bags that do not fall under (a) of this section and so are permitted for use.

AS.43.98.080(c) modifies the state regulations to account for when a city or borough has implemented their own single-use plastic bag regulations.

AS.43.98.080(d-f) outlines the responsibilities of the retailer.

AS.43.98.080(g) imposes a penalty for non-compliance.

AS.43.98.080(h) outlines the dissemination and use of collected fees.

AS.43.98.080(i) applies a carve-out for unincorporated communities and/or communities with populations of less than 5,500 people.

AS.43.98.080(j) defines terms used in this section.

Section 2: Adds a new section to AS 46.06.

AS 46.06.145 explains to retailers recycling program requirements for single-use plastic bags and outlines penalties for non-compliance.

Section 3: Adds an effective date of January 1, 2019.

Grocery bags not welcome in many Alaska villages

Posted: Sunday, May 04, 2003

By JOEL GAY

Anchorage Daily News

ANCHORAGE (AP) Outside the Western Alaska village of Emmonak, white plastic shopping bags used to start appearing 15 miles from town. They blew out of the dump and rolled across the tundra like tumbleweeds. In Galena, they snagged in the trees and drifted into the Yukon River. Outside Kotlik, on the Yukon Delta, bags were found tangled around salmon and seals.

No more. The villages are among at least 30 communities statewide that have banned plastic bags.

It's working out good here," said Peter Captain Sr., chief of the tribal council in Galena, where the city banned stores from using plastic bags in 1998. You used to find plastic bags all over the place, up in the trees. But you don't see that now."

Other places around the world also have decided the bags' nuisance outweighs their convenience. Ireland and Taiwan started taxing bags to curtail their use. South Africa banned them completely, as did Bangladesh after devastating floods were attributed to stray plastic bags blocking drains.

In Alaska, other communities are now considering prohibitions, including the largest city off the road system, Bethel.

They're horrible. They're all over," said Bethel City Councilman Jerry Drake. Once, he said, driving to the airport outside town, in a one-mile stretch I counted over 200 bags."

Drake's proposal would ban Bethel stores but not restaurants from using plastic bags, essentially requiring them to use paper. Elsewhere, shoppers have been encouraged to provide their own canvas or nylon bags, though in some paper-only villages, shoppers hoard plastic bags and reuse them. Violating the Bethel ban could cost up to \$500.

The Bethel council largely supports the proposed ban, members said. Public hearings later this month will gauge local opinion, but Drake and other people believe the council will put the decision before Bethel voters in October.

In my four years on the council, I've never heard people talk to me like this" about any other community issue, Drake said.

The council approved a ban two years ago only to see a voter initiative repeal the measure months later.

The only reason it got repealed was that it was a poorly written ballot measure, where yes meant no and no meant yes," Drake said. I had to read the ballot about three times before I realized what was going on with it, and I knew all about it."

Others say that banning plastic bags is the wrong way to solve Bethel's trash problem. Restaurant owner Yolanda Jorgensen sponsored the repeal initiative two years ago and said she'll work to defeat the ban again this fall. There are many angles to attack, she said.

Jorgensen doesn't dispute they're ugly but added, There are a lot more things littering our tundra than plastic bags."

Banning plastic wasn't easy in Emmonak or Galena, officials said, and attempts in other villages have failed because plastic bags have loyal fans.

Ban supporters, however, can point to places like Galena. The Yukon River village feared losing its plastic bags, but according to store owner Max Huhndorf, it's worked out OK. It took a little bit of adjustment, but we did it."

In Emmonak, the village corporation store pays a nickel for each paper bag returned, said Albert Westlock of the tribal council.

If the bag bans spread, there may soon be a bounty for plastic bags. Bill Stokes, the rural environmental specialist for the Department of Environmental Conservation, promotes recycling plastic bags into valuable crafts using nothing more than a size 6 crochet hook.

He first saw the method practiced in Mekoryuk in 1993, but it has spread statewide. People cut plastic bags into strips, then crochet them into backpacks, handbags, sweat bath mats and baskets.

Nevertheless, Stokes encourages bag bans.

Village by village by village, they're just really tired of them," he said.

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Alaska Dispatch News

Alaska News

Cordova will ban plastic bags and foam containers starting Oct. 1

✍ Author: Suzanna Caldwell ⓘ Updated: September 11, 2016 📅 Published September 11, 2016



The Eyak Preservation Council has provided reusable shopping bags to Cordova residents since the city council voted unanimously to ban plastic bags and polystyrene foam food containers. (Eyak Preservation Council)

Starting Oct. 1, plastic bags will be banned in the Prince William Sound town of Cordova.

The ban has been a year in the making, since the Cordova City Council voted unanimously in November 2015 to ban plastic bags and polystyrene foam food containers in the community of 2,200 residents.

Bethel and Hooper Bay are two other Alaska communities with plastic bag bans. Others, including Homer, have attempted similar bans in recent years. Homer's ban, first approved by the City Council, lasted only several months before being overturned by a popular vote in 2013. A Fairbanks tax on plastic bags was considered by the City Council in 2009, but community pushback forced the city to rescind the measure before it ever went into effect.

Cordova's one-year lag was to give businesses — there are two main grocery stores in the town — time to adapt to the change, according to Emily Stolarcyk, program manager for the Eyak Preservation Council, the organization that spearheaded the bag ban.

Enforcement will be through the police department, with violators facing a fine of up to \$1,000. But interim city manager and Police Chief Mike Hicks said it's unlikely the maximum fine would be imposed. He said most retailers have been receptive to the change.

"I don't think we're going to have any problems with people switching over," he said. "I think it's going to go just fine."

The council brought the idea to the city last year, but it wasn't exactly new. The Cordova High School club Future Problem Solvers suggested the idea to the city years earlier, though it never gained traction.

Stolarcyk decided to change that, gathering 300 signatures last summer before bringing the ordinance to the council.

She said Cordova, a fishing hub near the mouth of the Copper River, is dependent on healthy oceans. She said a plastic bag ban would help reinforce that message in the community.

It would also help clean things up. Stolarcyk said Cordova has some informal recycling but no regular program. She said it's not unusual to see plastic grocery sacks stuck in trees or bushes along the highway leading out to the landfill, 17 miles from the city center.

Former mayor Jim Kacsh, who approved the ordinance, said he often goes hunting for rabbits along the road. Bags and plastic foam clamshell boxes dot the landscape.

"You wind up sneaking up on a little plastic bag because they look just like the bunny," he said in a phone interview Wednesday. "They're everywhere."

He said there was some pushback from retailers during the debate, but it was minimal. Kacsh said he supports the ban, but he admits he's struggled with what to do at his own NAPA Auto Parts store. He's been saving boxes and looking into buying reusable cloth bags for customers. But those are expensive, and customers would have to pay for them.

James Brand, branch manager of the AC Value Center in Cordova, the city's largest retailer, said the store is still working through its stock of regular plastic bags. Last year the store handed out 140,000 plastic bags.

He said biodegradable bags are in the process of being shipped and will likely be there in time for the ban's implementation Oct. 1. But he said if they aren't the store will still have paper bags.

Brand said there was precedent for using biodegradable bags, since the Bethel AC store also uses them. He said the biggest challenge has been trying to get Cordova's sizable transient population to understand the upcoming ban. This summer the store handed out 400 reusable bags hoping to target those customers. They were a hit.

"We have a lot of people come through with the cloth bags," Branch said. "It's really is cool to see people embracing it."

About this Author

Suzanna Caldwell

Suzanna Caldwell is a former reporter for Alaska Dispatch News.

The problem with plastics

Litter a threat to Mat-Su moose, reindeer

By CHRIS FORD Frontiersman.com Aug 5, 2017



Research biologist Bill Collins shows Liz Jackson of Hatcher Pass Bed and Breakfast one of the moose from the small herd he keeps at the Palmer Experiment Farm. The mammals have fistulas on their sides allowing researchers and scientists direct access to their rumen where the first stage of food digestion takes place.

Courtesy photo

WASILLA — According to the Wall Street Journal, 100 billion plastic shopping bags are distributed throughout the United States each year, costing retailers an estimated \$4 billion annually. Included in that tally is 90 percent of all grocery bags and only 1 to 3 percent of the total is recycled.

A portion ends up in landfills, while others are spotted floating in lakes and rivers, stuck to trees or blowing across the landscape. Some of those are consumed by a multitude of wildlife and domesticated animals. Here in the Mat-Su, plastic bag consumption has led to the death of reindeer and caribou.

Plastic bags are made of polyethylene, a petroleum product. According to the national watchdog group EcoWatch, it takes approximately 1,000 years for polyethylene to break down. They do not biodegrade but instead photodegrade—breaking down into smaller and smaller bits. It's at this point where most reported cases of the product entering the food stream take place.

It is estimated approximately one billion seabirds and mammals die each year as a result of plastic bag ingestion. Death can also be painful. For larger animals such as mammals that ingest the entire bag or large piece of plastic, the product can wrap around their intestines or they choke and suffocate.

Dr. Bill Collins, a research biologist at the University of Alaska Matanuska Experiment Farm in Palmer, is heading up a program for Alaska Department of Fish and Game. He maintains a small herd of moose at the Palmer facility to study feeding habitats and nutritional values of the animal. As part of the research, the moose have fistulas located outside their rumen. The fistula is basically a hole with a rubber stopper that allows for direct access into the rumen.

The rumen is the first stomach of a ruminant, or mammal, which receives food or cud, and nutrients from esophagus. There the food is partially digested with the aid of bacteria and enzymes. The animal then regurgitates the food, or cud, and then chews it further allowing it to enter the digestive tract.

In a video supplied by the Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition, Collins pours the contents of a moose's rumen onto the ground. It is littered with plastic shopping bags and Zip-Lock style plastic bags. Collins said he periodically finds the plastic in the samples.

Collins said given the Farm's location, it is subject to strong winds. That makes it easy for plastic-based litter to frequently find its way onto the open pastures and surrounding land.

"It blows into the pens," Collins said. "It has happened elsewhere."

Collins said he spent 20 years in a similar position in Kenai where he observed the problem appearing in livestock. He's been in the Mat-Su for the past 35 years and started his current program gathering nutritional data on moose 12 years ago. Although he hasn't lost an animal, at least not a direct cause and effect, he is not ruling out that digestion of plastics hasn't impacted any of the animals in his study.

"If a portion of their rumen is filled partially with plastic, it limits the rumen's capacity and reduces digestion which can reduce nutrition. That can range from light to severe to death."

Collins said he constantly scours the landscape for stray plastics, adding there is no shortage. Collins added he hasn't seen an increase in the amount that makes its way onto the farm.

"Every time the wind blows, it's always there. If you're downwind from anything, it's prevalent," Collins said.

Carol Montgomery, chair of the Coalition's Plastic Bag Committee, said Williams Reindeer Farm has lost many animals over the years from plastic bag ingestion. She said the farm has necropsy reports to verify the cause. Agate Inn owners Harvey and Sandy Bowers, who have reindeer, or domesticated caribou, also confirm the plastic bag issue.

Harvey Bowers said vigilant scouring of their property results in approximately one pickup truck bed load of collected plastics each year. He said since the bags don't decompose, his animals are often digging up 30-year-old plastic bags while grazing. He made the age determination based on imprinted logos on the recovered bags.

"It's a long-term thing so we have to be constantly vigilant," Bowers said. "We've done necropsies on some of the reindeer. It's a miserable death...our age will be known as the age of plastic."

He said most of the collected trash through his property is blown-in plastic.

Montgomery said regarding wildlife, the only way to determine cause of death is through necropsy, which is expensive and not often done.

"We were able to confirm the death of a musk ox calf in Nome from plastic bag asphyxiation through Kimberlee Beckmen, M.S., D.V.M., PhD, a wildlife veterinarian at ADFG in Fairbanks," Montgomery said. "She also confirmed a sea turtle death from plastic obstruction in the Gulf of Alaska."

"So, while there are few necropsies done on wild animals, we are able to confirm deaths in domesticated animals, and efforts to prevent further casualties by patrolling their environment. This raises concerns about the mortality from plastic ingestion in the wild where animals are not protected in these ways. We know that moose eat plastic, but so far I have not heard of any necropsies done on them, so we don't know if it is killing them as often as it kills the caribou and reindeer. With all the pressure on subsistence and game resources it seems a shame to lose wildlife to such a preventable human cause," Montgomery concluded.

Contact reporter Chris Ford at 352-2270 or chris.ford@frontiersman.com

Borough Assembly member introduces plastic bag ordinances

By CHRIS FORD Frontiersman.com Aug 5, 2017



Some Mat-Su residents may have seen this picture before. It was taken behind Valley Community for Recycling Solutions. Mollie Boyer, who oversees operations, is standing next to a forest of plastic debris that, despite efforts to curtail it, blows in from the adjacent Central Landfill. The landfill has since made a concerted effort to clean up the debris, Boyer said.

Courtesy photo

PALMER — A loosely-knit group organized last fall had a goal of drawing attention to and educating Valley residents on the hazards of single-use plastic bags. Now they have the attention of the Mat-Su Borough Assembly.

At the body's Tuesday meeting, Assemblywoman Barbara Doty introduced Ordinance 17-099—"An ordinance...to establish a program designed to reduce the use of plastic bags by imposing an excise tax for plastic carryout bags on large retailers."

The ordinance would charge a 10-cent plastic shopping bag excise tax to retailers with annual sales of more than \$1 million. The legislation has multiple intentions. One is to reduce the volume of trash that ends up at the borough's Central Landfill. Another reason, Doty cited, is to reduce the amount of litter, as the bags are easily and often blown around Valley roads and fields often ending up stuck in trees, scrub and tall grasses. Several Mat-Su organizations and individuals have lost reindeer and caribou because the animals ingest the bags while foraging (see separate story).

As the ordinance stands now, the proposed excise tax is aimed at the Valley's largest retailers. As written, the tax would not be a direct charge to the end-user—consumers. An accompanying memorandum with the ordinance stated that because the tax is an excise tax, no sale or transfer of goods or services need occur for the tax to apply. The tax would apply anytime a retailer, as defined in the ordinance, provides a plastic bag to another regardless if there is a sale involved. Retailers filing timely tax returns would be permitted to retain 20 percent of the collected tax, the memo stated.

The memorandum stated that estimated costs of collecting the tax comes in at approximately \$60,000 which would pay for a half-time borough position. The tax would be collected at the wholesale level and collected quarterly. According to the document, at 21 million bags annually, the tax would bring in approximately \$2.1 million in revenue annually. That amount is anticipated to drop with the expected drop in plastic bag use by consumers. The memorandum states the generated revenues are intended to help fund recycling programs and promote recycling education in the Mat-Su.

In submitting the ordinance, Doty included examples from US cities where such a tax was approved. One of those included the 7-cent per bag tax approved in Chicago on Feb. 1, 2017. That tax included both plastic and paper bags. According to a recent study conducted by New York University and the University of Chicago's Energy and Environmental Lab, the number of included bags used by customers fell 42 percent in the first month following implementation.

According to Patti Fisher, a member of the Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition's Plastic Bag Committee, the group is committed to working with retailers to encourage this tax be passed on to customers in the form of a bag fee. Fisher stated that method exists in many cities across the country.

"How many times have you been handed a bag with two items in it," the committee posted on its Facebook social media page. "We are just programmed to take the bag without thinking. Maybe this will make people think twice about the garbage they are creating."

Comments on the group's Facebook page have been mixed, but mostly against such a plan.

Included among them is having big-box and grocery stores that fall under the ordinance offer a customer refund for those bringing their own bags while shopping. Others cry the tax is an example of "the nanny state rearing its ugly head".

An Aug. 1 post stated the committee "...worked very hard drafting an ordinance but in the end the lawyers make the final draft. Let's just say it is not perfect and we are going to try to add a couple of amendments to it on Aug. 15 after it is read."

No municipalities in Alaska implement a tax but several have banned them. Included are Cordova, Bethel and Hooper Bay.

The assembly is expected to hold the first public hearing on the proposed ordinance at its Aug. 15 regular meeting.

Contact reporter Chris Ford at 352-2270 or chris.ford@frontiersman.com

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LOCAL POLITICS

Wasilla City Council approves plastic bag ban starting July 1

TOPICS: Plastic Bags Wasilla City Council



(Photo by eflon/Flickr Creative Commons)

POSTED BY: MATT BUXTON JANUARY 10, 2018

The city council of Wasilla has voted to ban single-use plastic bags in a move to combat litter.

The council voted on Monday night to approve the ordinance that was put forward by Wasilla Mayor Bert Cottle, according to Alaska Public Media.

Unlike the pre-filed House Bill 264 by Rep. Andy Josephson, D-Anchorage, that seeks to impose a 20-cent tax on single-use plastic bags, the Wasilla City



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Walker will appoint one candidate by the end of the second week of session.

Here are the three finalists to fill the House District 40 vacancy | The Midnight Sun

Council's actions are an outright ban on plastic bags. It imposes a warning and fine system for businesses that ignore the ban, escalating to \$300 for the third and later offense.

The bill allows businesses to continue handing out paper bags or reusable bags for a free or an additional fee.

The reasoning is a little less bleeding-heart environmentalism than it is an attempt at dealing with rampant litter created by discarded plastic bags caught in the Mat-Su area's strong winds, Carol Montgomery, the unofficial chairwoman of the Mat-Su Zero Waste Commission's Plastic Bag Committee, told Alaska Public Media.

"Those bags, you see them skittering across the street everywhere. There's no way to safely contain plastic bags here in the Valley. There's no way to really dispose of them without them flying away," Montgomery told the radio station. "This is a minimal amount of government regulation to solve a really big problem."

Alaska Public Media also reported that the Plastic Bag Committee plans on handing out free reusable bags and would support a similar ban in the city of Palmer. Similar bans have already been instituted Bethel, Cordova and Hooper Bay.

The lone opposition came from Wasilla Councilman Tim Burney, who told Alaska Public Media, "If I want to shop at a store that has plastic bags, I should have the right to do so."

Full explanation

Bag Requirements – New City of Wasilla bag requirements, effective July 1, 2018

What the requirements mean

- Prohibits all establishments in City limits from providing single-use plastic disposable shopping

midnightsunak.com

The finalists are Leanna Mack of Utqiagvik, Sandy Shroyer-Beaver of Kotzebue and Eugene Smith of Kotzebue.

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The Midnight Sun

20 hours ago

This is pretty cool.

Congratulations again to my friend and colleague Congressman Don Young for becoming the Dean of the House. Today, his colleagues – both Republicans and Democrats – honored his years of service to ...

Senator Dan Sullivan

Video

[View on Facebook](#) · [Share](#)



The Midnight Sun

21 hours ago

The Midnight Sun shared a link.

Wasilla City Council approves plastic bag ban starting July 1 | The Midnight Sun
midnightsunak.com

The city council of Wasilla has voted to ban single-use plastic bags in a move to combat litter. The council voted on Monday night to...

bags for the purpose of carrying away goods from the point of sale.

- Allows establishments to provide customers with any size recyclable paper or reusable carryout bags.
- Allows establishments to provide carryout bags made of plastic 2.25 mil or thicker, with or without charge at their discretion.
- Imposes a warning to the establishment for the first offense, second offense \$100, and third offense \$300.
- Promotes reusable carryout bags as the best alternative to single-use plastic bags.


Exemptions

- Bags used in stores for bulk items or to protect vegetables, meat, frozen foods, and similar items are exempt.
- Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage bags or to contain pet waste, or yard waste bags are exempt.

Additional information

- **Read Ordinance Serial No. 17-24 (AM)**

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Wilson said it felt like she was being held responsible for the incidents.

Rep. Wilson says she was told to "just avoid him" after complaining about harassment by male legislator | The Midnight Sun

midnightsunak.com

Wilson said it wasn't the first time former legislator Bill Stoltz went after her.

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The Midnight Sun

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Legislators living within 50 miles of session will no longer be paid per diem starting in January 2019.

Commission ends per diem for legislators living near session, but rejects 10 percent pay cut | The Midnight Sun
midnightsunak.com

Legislative pay would have been reduced to \$45,360 annually.

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ON "WASILLA CITY COUNCIL APPROVES PLASTIC BAG BAN STARTING JULY 1"

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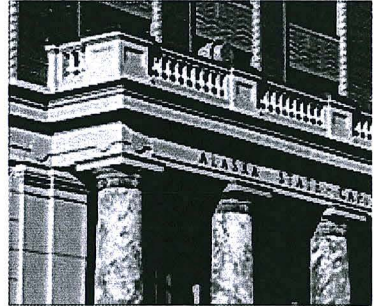
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Walker will appoint one candidate
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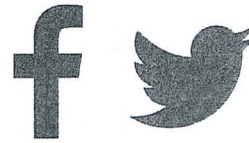
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SEARCH MIDNIGHTSUN



FEATURED

Reusable totes gain popularity in Fairbanks

Julie Herrmann/For the News-Miner Feb 15, 2014



A rack of reusable grocery bags on display at Fred Meyer West on Airport Way Wednesday morning, February 5, 2014. The store recently stopped giving customers a 5-cent refund per bag for using reusable bags.

Eric Engman/News-Miner

Buy Now

FAIRBANKS — Reusable bags are multiplying across Fairbanks. The soft floppy totes are sold at stores around Fairbanks and are often given out by businesses as well.

Big box retailers have long offered the totes for sale at checkout, touting them as a “green” alternative to plastic and paper. Fred Meyer, Walmart and Safeway all offer reusable bags for sale at or near the checkout line. Local printers also have noticed a sharp increase in the number of businesses wanting their logo and name printed on reusable bags.

“We’ve had quite a few orders lately for different reusable totes,” said Interior Graphics and Printing owner Michelle Maynor. “We actually have some that we use for our customers.”

Trademark, a Fairbanks printing and engraving company, sends its smaller orders out the door in reusable bags and has seen orders for printed bags explode.

“Maybe two years ago, we would get an order or two a year,” said Ron Macom, the owner of Trademark. “Lately, we’ve had probably three or four orders in the past two months. Throughout 2013, probably two or three dozen.”

For several years, Fred Meyer offered customers a 5 cent refund per reusable bag they used at checkout to encourage customers to not only buy reusable bags, but to keep bringing them back and reusing them. A few months ago, Fred Meyer stopped offering the refund, informing customers that the program was a success since customers are using more reusable bags.

“The consumer has changed their behavior and bring their own bags,” said Melinda Merrill, a Fred Meyer spokeswoman. “They don’t do it for 5 cents. They do it because they realized it’s better, and they will continue to use them.”

Safeway shopper Gene Baalam carried a Fred Meyer reusable bag when he shopped last Friday. “I never really liked those plastic bags,” Baalam said, “I think about once they get thrown in the garbage, what happens then?”

Fred Meyer shopper Bonita Post usually brings reusable bags to the store. "I've gotten into the habit, and I use them all the time," Post said. "I even make my own."

Some customers still like the standard plastic grocery bag. Frequent Fred Meyer shopper Nanci Jones uses reusable bags at Sam's Club, which sells reusable bags and doesn't offer bags at checkout, but likes getting plastic ones at Fred Meyer. She reuses them as trash bags, packing material and more.

"They're good for traveling," Jones said. "They make a great shower cap when I forget mine."

Proponents of reusable bags say the bags are environmentally friendly by keeping thousands of plastic bags out of landfills and can carry more items than plastic. Proponents of plastic say plastic bags are usually reused around the house and that reusable bags can spread disease from leaking liquids if not cleaned frequently.

Some cities, like Portland, Ore., have banned plastic grocery bags altogether. Other cities levy a tax of a few cents on every plastic bag a customer uses.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough considered such a tax back in 2009. The ordinance required that all large retailers in the borough tax customers 5 cents per plastic bag used. The profits would go toward a borough recycling program. Many members of the public called the tax premature, and it was rescinded Oct. 8, 2009, a month after it was adopted, without ever going into effect.

Several options available for recycling plastic bags

Customers who use plastic bags have several options for recycling them. Fred Meyer, Safeway and Walmart all have bins for plastic bags in their stores, but don't accept any other recyclables. The recycled bags are collected and hauled out of Fairbanks for recycling.

Most recycled plastic bags are turned into composite lumber, a durable wood product made of plastic and sawdust. Plastic bags also can be reused the same way as reusable bags by taking them back to the store and reusing them for groceries.

Another common way of recycling plastic grocery bags is reusing them around the home. Lining trash bins, picking up after pets, lining kitty-litter buckets, storing items to keep them dust-free, carrying lunch or wet laundry, protecting surfaces during painting projects and tying them over plants to protect them from a freeze are all common ways to reuse plastic bags.

One unique way to up-cycle a plastic bag is to use it as a crafting medium. The bags can be cut into strips and then knit, crocheted or woven into a reusable bag or tote.

Kodiak City Council bans disposable plastic shopping bags

By The Associated Press - January 30, 2018



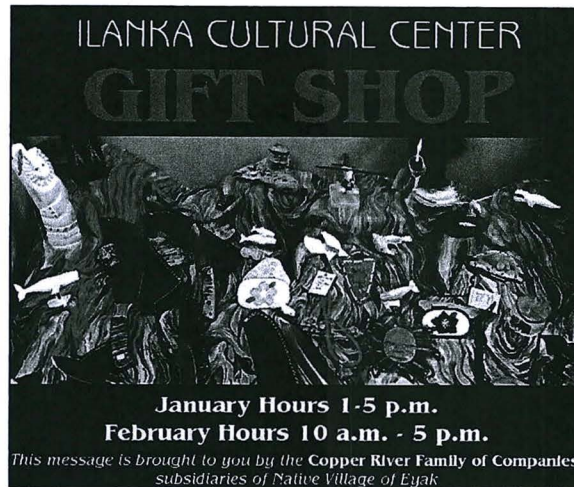
Kodiak city council just introduced a plastic bag ban.

ANMC Internal Medicine Same-Day Clinic <small>For our patients living outside of the Anchorage Service Unit (areas shaded in green), the ANMC Internal Medicine Clinic offers same-day primary care services for our people while visiting Anchorage.</small>		<small>Clinic is located in the Healthy Communities Building 3900 Ambassador Drive, 3rd floor • Anchorage, AK 99508</small> 
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KODIAK — The Kodiak City Council approved a ban on some plastic bags.

The new law goes into effect on April 22, the Kodiak Daily Mirror reported Monday.

Store owners, some of which have mixed feelings on the ban, will be able to keep giving customers bags from their current inventories for eight months.



Councilmember Charles Davidson said only “disposable plastic shopping” bags will be banned, meaning it’s possible store owners could give out other types of plastic bags.

Other plastics still allowed include those used to “contain dampness or leaks from items such as frozen foods, meat or fish, flowers or potted plants” and “bags sold for buyer’s use off the seller’s premises for such purposes as the collection and disposal of garbage, pet waste, or yard waste.”

David Zimmerman, manager of Sutliff’s hardware store, said he voiced some concerns to the council but that his store would adjust to the changes.

“It is probably going to cost us a bit more to switch to paper bags, but it’s manageable,” Zimmerman said. “Hopefully people will remember to bring bags with them when they’re shopping. It’ll take some adjustment, but we’ll figure it out.”

Kelly Krueger, speaking on behalf of herself and Sun’aq Tribe of Kodiak, said that the tribe has submitted a grant application to National Geographic to fund efforts to reduce marine plastic pollution.

Related Stories

- Stay informed about city council through Youtube channel
- City lots stir conversation during council meeting
- Fish Factor: Kodiak braces for crash of cod stocks
- UPDATE: 7.9 earthquake strikes outside Kodiak; tsunami warning lifted

If given money via the grant, some would go toward purchasing 2,000 reusable bags for public use in Kodiak.

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)

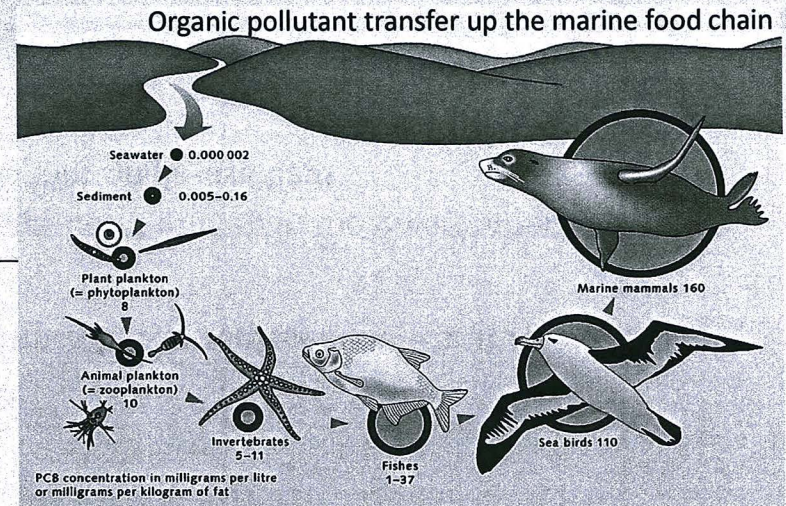


Why Plastic Bags?

- 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*

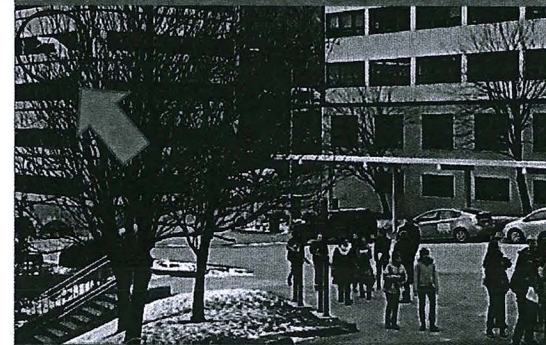


Why Not Start with a Ban?

- 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

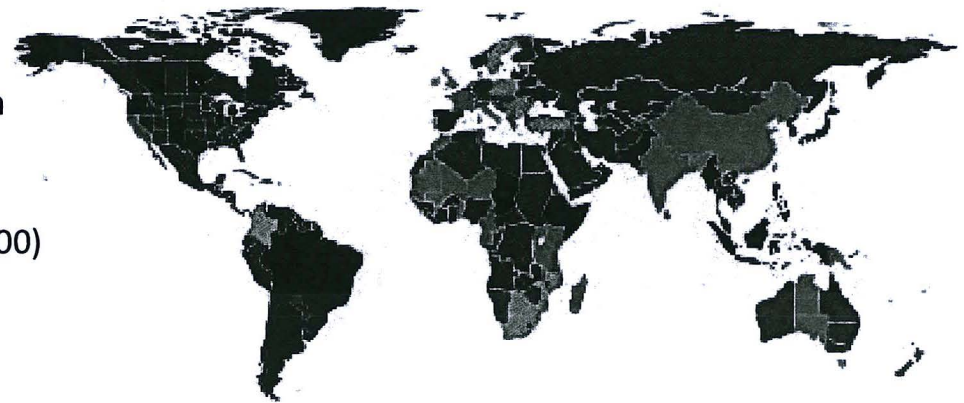
Peer Pressure

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**



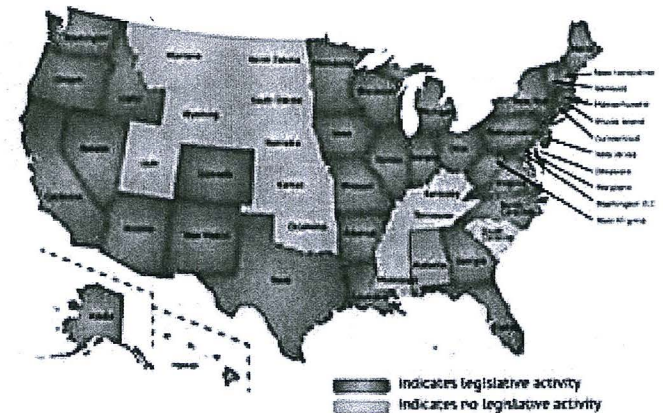
- Plastic bags banned
- A tax on some plastic bags
- Voluntary tax agreement
- Partial tax or ban (municipal/regional)

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)		

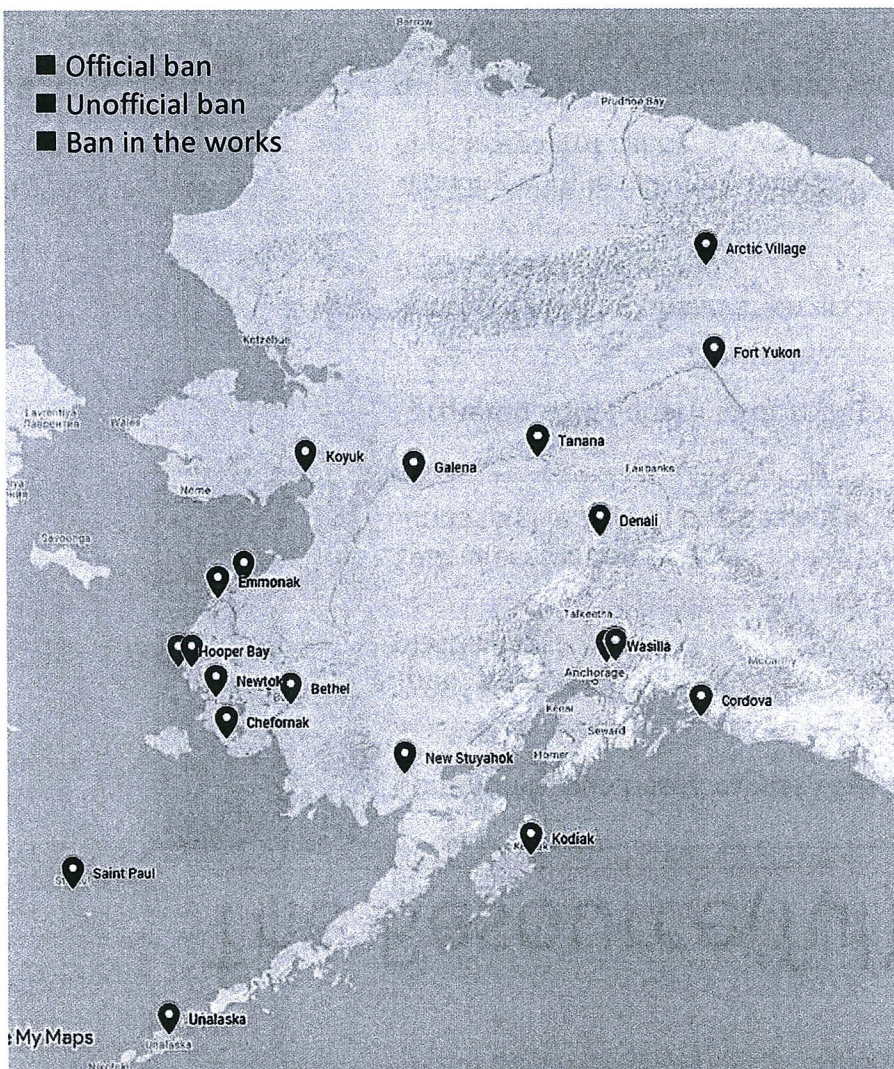
*Ban is statewide

() = number of boroughs/cities involved



Alaska

- Official ban
- Unofficial ban
- Ban in the works



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

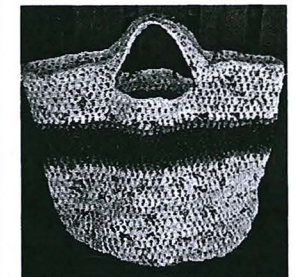
Bag Bans

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”)

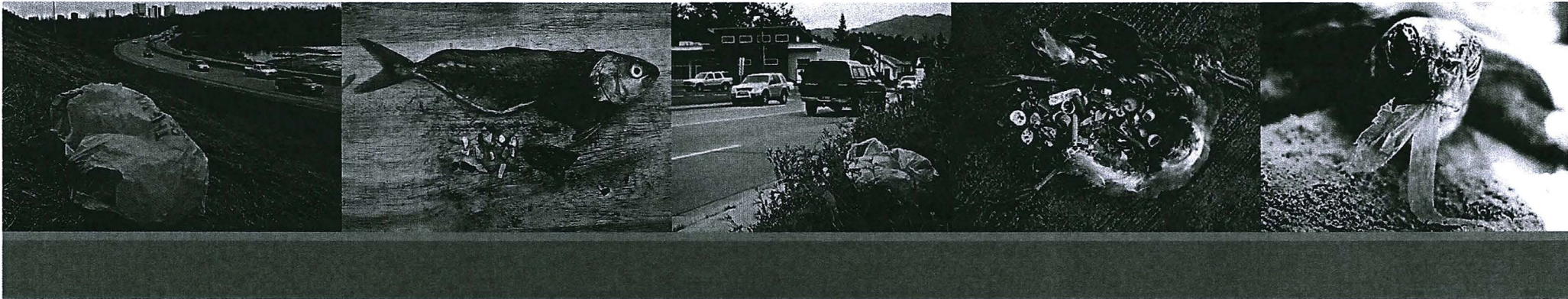
Section 2

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 73.5%.

Reuse
Encourage a shift away from the use and loss of culture. Reusing plastic bags drastically cuts demand for new production.

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

THE BENEFITS

Save 685 Gallons of Oil

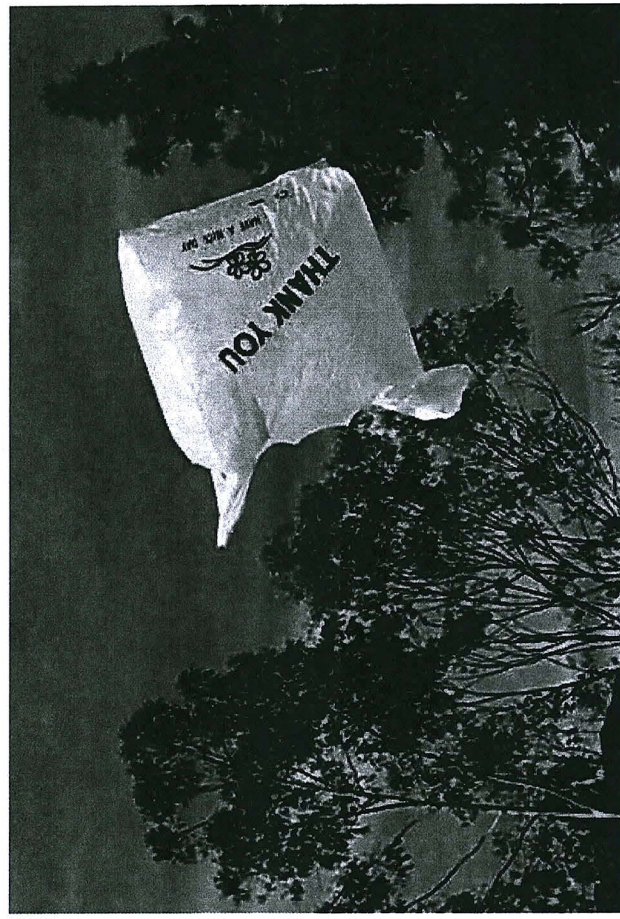
Save 2.77 kWh of Electricity

Save 98 Million lbs of Food

Save 30 Cubic Yards of Landfill Space

Reduce Air Pollution

Save 500 Lives such as Birds, Fish and Dolphins



From: [Rep. Andy Josephson](#)
To: [Lisa Delaney](#)
Subject: FW: Proposed SB 133 & others
Date: Friday, January 12, 2018 9:17:12 AM

From: Gloria Manni [mailto:glmanni@gci.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 1:19 PM
To: Sen. Berta Gardner <Sen.Berta.Gardner@akleg.gov>
Cc: Rep. Harriet Drummond <Rep.Harriet.Drummond@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: RE: Proposed SB 133 & others

Dear Senator Gardner,

Continuing my conversation on proposed legislation, this is express my support to all the new legislation you are proposing and especially SB 133.

The issue of allowable under age marriages in Alaska came to my attention only a few months ago in reading a NY Times article.

Thank you very much for sponsoring the due update of the pertinent law.

Gloria Manni

From: Gloria Manni <glmanni@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 9, 2018 1:13 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson
Cc: Sen. Berta Gardner; Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: Proposed HB 264 - Tax on disposable plastic bags

Dear Representative Josephson,

Non degradable disposable plastic bags are indeed a problem; however I suggests that the proposed HB 264 is amended to reflect that ONLY BIODEGRADABLE DISPOSABLE BAGS ARE USED/STOCKED BY VENDORS OF ANY TYPE IN ALASKA.

As I see it this is a better cure to the problem than a penalty tax in that:

The biodegradable plastic bags may cost a few cents more and the cost will be carried by the buyer (not a tax penalty, but the cost of using a better quality product) ;

The biodegradable bags will no longer be a menace in solid waste landfills.

Biodegradable bags are widely used and available. A small note/example: MOA/Park & Rec has been using for quite some time biodegradable bags in their dog waste stations.

I appreciate your consideration to my proposed change.

Respectfully,

Gloria Manni
2208 Churchill Drive, Anchorage 99517
Tel 276-8498



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: Carol Montgomery
To: [Lisa Delaney](#)
Cc: [Patti Fisher](#); [Mollie Bover](#); [Liz Jackson](#)
Subject: Info on plastic bags and legislation
Date: Friday, January 12, 2018 11:58:00 AM
Attachments: [article Dec. PP.docx](#)
[article Jan FM Spectrum .docx](#)

Hi Lisa,

The Zero Waste Coalition Plastic Bag Committee is an informal group of volunteers who became mobilized after we found out that local caribou and reindeer were dying from ingesting them. Our approach was to raise awareness of the hazards which include: Local ruminant animals such as caribou, moose and reindeer are attracted to plastic bags, eat them and die when the bags block their rumen. Dr. Collins was our first contact. 746-6326. The winds in the Valley create a unique problem. There is no way to safely dispose of these bags out here, as they will blow out of the landfill, dumpsters, and when being loaded onto garbage trucks when it's windy.

These bags create an unsightly litter situation which hurts tourism, an important industry. Plastic litter eventually ends up in the ocean. Plastic never biodegrades, but breaks up into small particles called micro plastics. Plankton eat these particles. Salmon eat plankton, so it comes back to up on our dinner plates.

Here are some preliminary links I put together to support the above. We have been working on this issue for a long time so please feel free to contact me by email or phone if I can be of any help.

Andy wanted to see the video of Dr. Collins at the Matanuska Experiment Farm. Scroll down our Facebook page to videos and click on the two videos: <https://www.facebook.com/BagItMatSu/>. On that page you should also find all the local newspaper articles, TV coverage, etc.

Plastics in the ocean:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/good-environmental-status/descriptor-10/pdf/GESAMP_microplastics_full_study.pdf

This relates to our salmon:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278041328_Ingestion_of_Microplastics_by_Zooplankton_in_the_Northeast_Pacific_Ocean

Bag Legislation:

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/plastic-bag-legislation.aspx>

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-carryout-bag-fees-are-better-than-plastic-bag-bans_us_588187ace4b08f5134b61f79

<https://www.cawrecycles.org/list-of-national-bans>

Chicago went from ban to ban with

fee: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-chicago-plastic-bag-7-cent->

tax-edit-0206-20170203-story.html

Hawaii went from banning single use plastic to banning all plastic with a fee for paper <http://khon2.com/2017/07/23/honolulu-mayor-to-sign-expanded-plastic-bag-ban-bill-for-oahu/>

A couple of local Mat-Su newspaper articles

Wasilla's Bag Ordinance:

[https://cityofwasilla.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/search?keywords=ordinance 17-24&location=108&preview=13644](https://cityofwasilla.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/search?keywords=ordinance%2017-24&location=108&preview=13644)

Good luck!

Carol Montgomery
Chair, Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition Plastic Bag Committee
907 355-4451



From: [Rep. Andy Josephson](#)
To: [Courtney Munson](#)
Cc: [Rep. Harriet Drummond](#); [Lisa Delaney](#); [Thomas Atkinson](#); [Megan Holland](#)
Subject: RE: House Bill 264 / single use plastic bags
Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 7:36:54 AM

From: Courtney Munson [mailto:courtneyanne12@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 9, 2018 11:56 AM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Cc: Rep. Harriet Drummond <Rep.Harriet.Drummond@akleg.gov>
Subject: House Bill 264 / single use plastic bags

Hello Rep. Josephson,

Just saw the news about this bill and wanted to say thank you for your action on this issue to lend my support. A group of us recently started a zero waste group on Facebook (Alaska Zero Waste if you want to search it) and it is taking off rapidly. With the ban in Wasilla it seems like there is momentum right now among a very diverse group of people across the political spectrum. Great timing for your bill! I really think addressing plastic consumption/waste is an issue that can bring people together and maybe provide some lessons on how we can get beyond the divisiveness that other environmental issues seemed to be mired in.

About a year ago I was working on building a network of individuals and groups in Anchorage interested in trying to address our seeming addiction to single use plastic (particularly the bags). I met with folks at the muni and with my Assembly member, friend, and neighbor Erik Croft, and also talked to people in other communities around the state who have tried to address this issue in different ways. I stopped working on it mostly because I didn't have the bandwidth personally because I went back to work full time last spring. With the FB group I feel like we are getting more organized. Many of the individuals in the group were involved in the Wasilla ban that just passed. I have some ideas for grassroots efforts that could complement the proposed legislation if your staff would like to reach out to me, or to get connected to the zero waste community we've started online.

I was also curious why you decided to go with the tax instead of the ban. I know there are pros and cons to each approach.

Thanks,
Courtney

P.S. Ccing Harriet since she is my neighbor and knows my passion about stuff like this and can vouch that I'm a real live person. :-)

--

Courtney Munson
courtneyanne12@gmail.com
(907) 231-7037

From: Patricia Dick
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Ban Plastic Bags
Date: Wednesday, March 7, 2018 8:49:46 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

Did you know a sperm whale can die from just one plastic bag? It has actually happened. Plastic is quickly filling up our ocean. Just recently, I read a study that said there is so much plastic in Atlantic fish that they are unhealthy to eat! How long is it going to be until they say the same about Pacific Salmon? We have to start somewhere. Plastic bags are something we can actually do something about! They have been banned in Europe for years. They remove their food from any plastic containers in Germany and leave the plastic at the store! You put a plastic bottle in a machine and get back money! At the very least we can take a reusable bag to the store and pack our groceries home that way. How much is a clean ocean worth? How much is a unpolluted fish worth? How much are healthy children worth?

Please ban plastic bags in Alaska, they need to go away forever, there is no place in our ocean for them or our landfill!

Patricia Dick

From: Clyde Boyer and Vivian Finlay
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Support for HB 264
Date: Wednesday, March 7, 2018 4:13:26 PM

I am one of the leaders of the Kachemak Advocates of Recycling (KARe) group in Homer whose mission is to reduce waste in the Lower Kenai Peninsula Borough. Our group supports decreasing the use of single use plastics, like the disposable bags. So we support this bill because a user fee may decrease the amount of bags that are used in Alaska.

Personally I'd like to see a complete ban on such bags, or a high user fee. But this is a good start.

Please support this bill so that it can go to the full House for further action.
Thank you.
Vivian Finlay



--
455 Elderberry Drive,
Homer, AK. 99603 USA
(907) 435-3903

Box 521187

Big Lake, AK 99652

March 7, 2017

Dear Legislators:

Thank you for your efforts to beautify our state and protect wildlife and our waterways with a plastic bag ban. Any kind of reduction of single use items will help eliminate litter and pollution in Alaska.

Please pass this legislation.

Sammy Taylor

From: Hatcher Pass B&B [mailto:cabins@hatcherpassbb.com]

Sent: Tuesday, January 09, 2018 1:54 PM

To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>

Subject: Plastic Bag Bill

Dear Mr. Josephson,

Thank you for House Bill N. 264. Do you have someone in the Senate that will be putting forth a similar bill in the Senate? Is that how action could be moved forward with this?

I am a member of the Plastic Bag Committee of the Mat Su Zero Waste Coalition in the Mat Su Valley, and we are quite happy with the Ordinance that the city of Wasilla passed last night to ban the distribution of flimsy single use plastic bags. We would have liked legislation that included a fee on plastic bags, but we are thankful for the move forward on this that the city of Wasilla took.

We will be working with Palmer in the the hopes that their city and also the small city of Houston in the Mat Su Borough will also ban single use plastic bags.

When we were presenting at the Wasilla Chamber about the legislation, I told Shelley Hughes that I thought a statewide ban on plastic bags only makes sense in light of our fisheries, tourism and scenic beauty of the State. She just kinda rolled her eyes and indicated there was no way it would pass in Juneau.

We have good momentum and conversations going on in the Valley, and we have the best recycling center in the Sate as well. I believe we could help in the cause.

I look forward to hearing more, and working to make this Bill law.

Liz Jackson, Owner

Hatcher Pass Bed and Breakfast

"Authentic Alaskan Log Cabins"

Hatcher Pass Bed and Breakfast

Phone: 907-745-6788

E-mail: cabins@hatcherpassbb.com

Facebook Page - Hatcher Pass B&B



From: Carol Hoover
To: [Lisa Delaney](#)
Cc: [Dune Lankard](#)
Subject: Re: cloth bag photos
Date: Monday, February 12, 2018 8:38:24 AM

Hi Lisa,

I am on it!

Our compliments to Representative Andy Josephson for introducing this visionary bill.

Re the photos we sent of the canvas bags - let me know if they get reproduced anywhere - thanks. Have you called the Anchorage Daily News or sent them a press release?

(So glad to get feedback re how I did on the call :-)

Best regards,
Carol



Executive Director
Eyak Preservation Council
PO 460 Cordova, AK 99574
(907)424-5890
(415)250-9472 cell
www.eyakpreservationcouncil.org
Where Wild Salmon Rule

From: Kendra Zamzow
To: [House Labor and Commerce; Lisa Delaney](#)
Subject: HB 264
Date: Thursday, March 08, 2018 5:41:22 PM

It was here in Palmer, at the Matanuska Experiment Farm, that researchers determined the impact of plastic bags on moose and caribou -- who were eating them. I know from personal experience -- a dog of mine died after a friend came over to take care of him and left plastic bags around.

Plastics are wonderful. They are essential in medical care. But we do not need them as a container for our groceries.

I support this bill. And I am proud of Bethel, Cordova, and Wasilla for taking a stand on this issue already!

Thank you,

*Kendra Zamzow, PhD
Chickaloon, AK
907.354.3886*

"We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom." EO Wilson

From: Helen Thomas
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: PLEASE BAN plastic bags
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 9:50:07 AM

I think a 20 cents or even higher fee for plastic bags is a good idea. I could go with no fee but please ban plastic bags. Change is difficult but it is way beyond time for this to happen. While the making of cotton bags also leave a carbon footprint, they do decompose. Plastic is just plain bad for the environment.

Sent from my iPad
Helen Thomas

From: Greg Streveler
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Plastic bags
Date: Thursday, March 8, 2018 9:37:32 PM

I want to register my support for legislation to restrict the distribution of single-use plastic bags. Thank you, Greg Streveler, Gustavus AK

Sent from my iPad

From: Pete Praetorius
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Cc: [Rep. George Rauscher](#)
Subject: In support of HB 264: Ban the Bags
Date: Thursday, March 8, 2018 6:44:38 PM

Dear Members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee:

I'm writing in support of HB 264. I agree with the Sponsor's Statement that "Single-use plastic bags are harmful to our environment, our wildlife, and our economy." I also agree with changes to the bill in that it now bans the thin bags, sets the standard for reusable bags at 4 mil, and charges a 10 cent pass through fee on reusable plastic and paper bags.

As I drove the Glenn Highway outside of Palmer this morning, the wind was blowing lightly and I saw two bag blow across the road directly in front of me, and I saw several bags in trees and bushes. It is time that we rid Alaska of these thin nuisance bags.

Thank you for considering this measure.

Sincerely,

Pete Praetorius

Dr. Pete Praetorius
pwpraetorius@alaska.edu
Associate Professor of Communication
University of Alaska Anchorage | Matanuska-Susitna College
PO Box 2889
Palmer Alaska, 99645
907-745-9728 office
907-745-4747 home

From: Cheryl Cook
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: H.B. 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 8:22:15 AM

I'm writing to urge support for this bill banning plastic bags and promoting reusable ones. It's time for the state do more to help its citizens free themselves from this toxic addiction and free our beautiful state from the pollution it creates.

Thank You.

Cheryl Cook
PO Box 184
Gustavus AK 99826
9075008091

I am writing in favor of House Bill HB264. My name is Annemieke Powers and I live outside Palmer. I am a small business owner and a civil engineer who has worked for the last 25 years or so in cleaning up contaminated sites.

My main concern with plastic bags is the long term economic and environmental impact of plastic pollution. Even when people properly dispose of these bags, too many bags blow out of the landfill, trash bins and other containers. They are very light and easily transported by water and wind, which we have an abundance of in Alaska, especially at this time of the year.

My question is: who is going to clean up the pollution and who is going to pay for it? In my professional experience, it is cheaper to prevent pollution at the source than to pay for cleanup after the fact. A bag ban or fee does exactly that. It reduces pollution at the source. The World Economic Forum, in 2016, predicted that at current rates of pollution, the world's oceans would contain more plastic by weight than fish by the year 2050. This impairment to the oceans and fisheries could have a future economic impact to Alaskans. Protecting the salmon industry was one of the main reasons that Cordova successfully imposed a bag ban in 2016. And we have not even begun to assess the impact to the food chains of land animals. At the Mat-Su Experimental Farm plastic bags have already been found in the stomachs of caribou and moose. Alaskans rely heavily on the beauty and health of our land and waters for tourism, hunting and fishing and I think we should be proactive in protecting these resources.

Since plastic pollution is widespread and not the sole responsibility of any one person, corporation or nation, most clean-up costs will likely be borne by government entities which means it will eventually be paid for by the taxpayers. That means by you and by me. If we don't act, our kids and grandkids will bear an even larger cost as the pollution problem will not go away by itself, but will just grow. Banning or imposing a fee on these bags certainly won't eliminate all plastic pollution, but it is a very simple means of eliminating one, widely used pollution source. And it is something that can be controlled by the individual. I cannot control how companies package their goods, but I can control how I carry them from the store to my car.

Lastly in regards to the question of government overreach, to me, this bill does not affect what I buy, how much I buy, or where I shop. It does not affect what I do with the items I buy. It only affects how I carry the items out of the store. There are many ways to carry out your purchases and I think Alaskans are resourceful enough to come up with their own ideas. My household stopped using plastic grocery bags years ago and honestly, it has not been a hardship. Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: Zachary Brown
To: House Labor and Commerce
Cc: Lisa Delaney
Subject: Please ban plastic bags! Pass HB 264.
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 8:17:56 AM

Dear House Labor and Commerce Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support of HB 264 to ban single-use plastic bags from large Alaska stores.

I was trained as a PhD oceanographer at Stanford University, and I can tell you that plastic is a disaster for our oceans -- if current trends continue, there will be more plastic than fish in the global ocean by 2050.

More importantly, I am a born-and-raised Alaskan, and I am a subsistence fisherman. My family depends on clean, plastic-free water.

Please pass HB 264 into law, and keep plastic pollution out of our oceans!

Thank you for your consideration,
Zach

Zachary Brown
PhD, Stanford University
Founding Director, Inian Islands Institute
<http://inianislandsinstitute.org/>

From: Katherine Hocker
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Plastic bag ban
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 8:31:19 AM

Dear Committee Members-

I am writing to strongly support H.B 264, the bill to ban single-use plastic bags less than 4 mm thick. I'm thrilled that this legislation is being proposed. Discarded plastic bags are not only an unsightly nuisance, but evidence is clear that they are a serious threat to the environment—especially ocean ecosystems. I have visited other places (such as the island of Hawaii) in which such a ban exists, and it appears not to unduly inconvenience businesses or consumers.

Thank you for your consideration.

-Katherine Hocker
9 Sand Lance LN
Gustavus, AK 99826

From: michelle putz
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Testimony on HB 264 - the plastic bag ban
Date: Thursday, March 8, 2018 9:12:12 PM

As the lead for the Sitka volunteer group, Bags for Change, we want to testify in support of HB 264. We believe that a disposable shopping bag ban benefits and protects Alaskans and our environment. We are in full support of this bill.

There is growing concern about the effects of plastic and plastic bags on human health and on the environment upon which we depend. And there is a local and global concern about the number of disposable bags being used and thrown away.

Plastic bags are harmful to human health and are of particular concern in Sitka, where they can easily end up in the ocean. Plastic fragments in the ocean such as those from plastic bags absorb pollutants like PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyl) and PAHs (Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), which are known to be hormone-disrupting chemicals. When marine organisms consume plastics in our oceans, these chemicals can make their way through the ocean's food web and then into humans who eat fish and other marine organisms (<http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2013/12/12/250438904/how-plastic-in-the-ocean-is-contaminating-your-seafood>). Nearly all commercially available plastics tested contained compounds that release estrogen-mimicking chemicals that have adverse human health effects at low doses especially in small children and fetuses, effects include reducing sperm count, cancers, infertility, feminizing boys, and masculinizing girls (Yang et al. 2011 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3222987/>).

Plastic bags are also affecting our environment. Plastic bags are made from petroleum, which contributes to climate change. The U.S alone uses 12 million barrels of oil every year to meet the demand for plastic bags. Plastic bags are particularly harmful to marine life. Plastic bags and their associated plastic pieces are often mistaken for food by animals, birds, and marine life like fish and sea turtles. The consumed plastic then congests the digestive tracts of these animals, and can lead to health issues such as infections and even death by suffocation.

The Bags for Change group is working to educate the community of Sitka about these health and other concerns and has been gathering data and input from the community. While some individuals are concerned about a ban or a fee, we are hearing overwhelming support for action to reduce the number of disposable plastic bags given away in Sitka.

We recently did a random survey of 252 Sitka adults walking into our 3 local grocery stores. We asked, in Sitka, what should be done with disposable plastic bags. The question and results are as follows:

In Sitka, should single-use disposable plastic bags be:

- A) Banned = 48 (19%)
- B) Provided, but for a fee that would be used to support Sitka Schools and to reduce residents electric costs, = 129 (51.2%)
- C) Handed out for free, = 42 (16.7%)
- D) No opinion = 33 (13.1%)

A similar poll on a very conservative facebook page showed results of 195 = No Action; 225 = Take action on bags (132 = Ban; 93 = Fee).

Bags for Change knows that citizens and visitors will have to adjust and learn a more sustainable behavior. But the change is not arduous or costly to make. And in the end, it benefits us all and provides people with a new model for the future adding new sustainable and resilient behaviors and habits.

Thank you for taking our testimony. We encourage you to move House Bill 264 forward and vote for it when it comes up. If you have any questions for us, please feel free to call me at 907-747-2708.

Sincerely,
Michelle Putz
Bags for Change
131 Shelikof Way, Sitka, AK 99835

From: vivandclyde@gmail.com
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Support for HB 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 10:06:08 AM

Please support HB 264 and send it to the full House for further action.

I am an advocate for recycling and reducing the use of plastics, including bags. I am also one of the leaders of the Kachemak Advocates of Recycling (KARe) group in Homer whose mission is to reduce waste in the Lower Kenai Peninsula Borough. Our group supports decreasing the use of single use plastics, like the disposable bags. So we support this bill because a user fee may decrease the amount of bags that are used in Alaska.

I would like to see a large user fee for plastic bags, more than the proposed 20 cents per bag, or a complete ban on the use of such bags.

Alaska has more coastline than the rest of the USA. Wouldn't it be wonderful to lead the nation in protecting our coast, oceans, waterways, by banning the use of single use plastic bags to haul groceries? I think so.

Thank you.
Clyde Boyer



--
[455 Elderberry Drive,](#)
[Homer, AK, 99603 USA](#)
[\(907\) 435-3903](#)

From: Sarah Glaser
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Support for plastic bag ban
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 10:47:49 AM

Dear Rep. Sam Kito and committee aid Caitlyn Ellis,

I am writing in support of the ban on single-use plastic bags (HB 264).

We must be especially mindful of the harmful effects of plastic on marine life (and human life) in Alaska, where we depend on the ocean for much of our locally-sourced food and many of our livelihoods.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Sarah Glaser

2700 West 31st Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99517

--



SARAH K. GLASER

t. 207 449 2266

w. sarahkglaser.be



From: Annemieke Powers
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: HB 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 10:25:35 AM

I am emailing in support of the bill banning plastic bags in Alaska. I am seventeen years old and I do not want to have to pay for the cost of cleaning up plastic bag pollution when I am older. Plastic bags are not necessary for our community. Animals and fish eat them which is harmful for an area where many families rely on hunting and fishing. Also preventing pollution is generally more cost effective than cleaning up a widespread pollution problem. Furthermore, bringing your own bag will not be any more expensive or inconvenient than having plastic bags.

Thanks,
Shannon Powers

From: Beth Davidow
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Supporting a Ban on Plastic Bags
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 11:08:11 AM

Dear Representatives,

I'm writing to urge you to support a ban on plastic bags in Alaska.

As a diver, and world traveler, it is shocking to see how many single use plastic bags end up not only in our global oceans, but also on beaches in far flung places. I've been diving on beautiful coral reefs and witnessed plastic bags, waving in gentle currents, in the depths. I've come up from a dive in remote wilderness areas, pushing aside plastic bags streaming in on tides and currents.

Plastic bags in Alaska may end up in areas you can't imagine! And worse, they end up in the stomachs of marine life. Sea turtles that feed on jellyfish mistake plastic bags for food; consuming bags kills them. The great whales also ingest hundreds of bags, which clog up their insides and kill them. We've seen plastic bags tied like nooses around the necks of marine birds.

There is absolutely no reason, in this day and age, for humans to be using plastic bags.

Plastic bags also contain many toxins and chemicals including BPA which has direct links to cancer. They are made from oil – each bag uses about the same amount that would drive a car 115 metres.

Alaska is a magnet that draws people from around the world with its iconic beauty both on land and at sea. When I travel Alaska and see plastic bags alongside roads, in streams, wafting on breezes over the tundra, and floating through the Inside Passage, I am mortified that this great state is so terribly littered. These sights do not represent the wilderness beauty that brings millions of tourism dollars to Alaska!

Please keep Alaska beautiful. Please keep Alaskan wildlife, and people, safe from the toxic and wasteful plastic bags. Please make Alaska one of the leaders in our Nation by banning plastic bags.

Respectfully,
Beth Davidow

From: Patricia Anderson
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Cc: Yttap4@gmail.com
Subject: H.B. 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 10:21:08 AM

Yes, yes, yes! Stop the pollution of plastic! I have a friend who says she uses them for small garbage cans. I point out that they usually have holes in them before she gets the groceries out so better be dry garbage going in it.

San Francisco and Austin have banned plastic bags along with smart Alaskan towns.

Just do it!

Patricia Anderson
2306 E 74th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99507
(907) 349-1440

Sent from my iPad



One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 200 • Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tel (907) 586-1325 • Fax (907) 463-5480 • www.akml.org

February 27, 2018

House Labor & Commerce Committee
Chair Rep. Sam Kito & Rep. Adam Wool
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99811

RE: CS for HB 264 – An Act relating to a fee for disposable bags relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; relating to the recycling of disposable shopping bags; and providing for an effective date.

Dear Committee Members,

Though the CS for HB 264 is not yet scheduled in your committee, I thought I might take this time to relay AML's opposition to this bill.

This is an issue that should and is currently being addressed by many municipalities throughout the State. Many municipalities have come up with ideas that "nudge" purchasers to use re-usable bags. Municipalities also have the ability to work directly with the retail establishments in their area to arrive at a solution which works for all involved. To simply impose a fee for undesired behavior does very little to curtail that behavior.

At a time of budget shortfalls, I feel it would be unwise to add to the state's budget to make this bill operational; to say nothing of the direct costs to retailers that will then be passed off to the purchaser. Again, there are more effective and efficient ways to change ones' behavior.

This is an issue that should remain under local control. While the State has bigger fish to fry, municipalities can eventually change behavior rather than watch the State "charge" all involved.

Thank you,

Kathie Wasserman
Executive Director

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 264(L&C)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES JOSEPHSON, Drummond

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act prohibiting disposable plastic shopping bags; relating to a minimum price for**
2 **paper and other shopping bags; relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; and**
3 **providing for an effective date."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 * **Section 1.** AS 46.06 is amended by adding a new section to read:

6 **Sec. 46.06.145. Shopping bags.** (a) Except as provided in (b) of this section, a
7 retail seller of goods or services may not provide a disposable plastic shopping bag to
8 a purchaser to carry away or protect goods purchased from, or serviced by, the retail
9 seller.

10 (b) The prohibition established in (a) of this section and the minimum price
11 established in (c) of this section do not apply to a disposable plastic shopping bag that
12 is

13 (1) used only to contain a product that does not have other packaging,
14 including bulk grains, fruit, nuts, vegetables, meat, candy, bakery goods, prepared

1 foods, or other food products or small hardware items;

2 (2) used only to contain ice;

3 (3) used only to contain or wrap flowers;

4 (4) provided by a pharmacist for the sole purpose of containing
5 prescription drugs;

6 (5) used only to package an unconsumed portion of a bottle of wine in
7 compliance with AS 04.16.120;

8 (6) used only to contain a newspaper;

9 (7) sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as
10 garbage, pet waste, or yard waste bags; or

11 (8) a reusable bag.

12 (c) Except for a bag described in (b) of this section, a retail seller

13 (1) shall charge a minimum of 10 cents for each paper or other
14 shopping bag, including a reusable bag, provided to a purchaser; a retail seller may not
15 sell a disposable plastic shopping bag prohibited under (a) of this section;

16 (2) shall state the price of a paper or other shopping bag on a sales
17 receipt, invoice, or other record of the sale or other transfer of the paper or other
18 shopping bag subject to this subsection;

19 (3) shall post the price of a paper or other shopping bag prominently at
20 the point of sale of the retail seller;

21 (4) shall collect from the purchaser the minimum price imposed by this
22 subsection; and

23 (5) may not rebate or reimburse a purchaser the minimum price
24 imposed by this subsection.

25 (d) A retail seller shall make reusable bags available for purchase at the point
26 of sale of the retail establishment.

27 (e) The department may assess an administrative fine against a retail seller that
28 violates (a), (c), or (d) of this section. An administrative fine under this subsection
29 may not exceed

30 (1) \$250 for a first violation;

31 (2) \$500 for a second violation within one year; and

Introduced By:
Date:
Public Hearing:
Action:
Vote:

Parker, Murphy
March 28, 2018
April 11, 2018

CITY OF SOLDOTNA
ORDINANCE 2018-013

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SOLDOTNA MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 8 – HEALTH AND SAFETY TO
ESTABLISH A NEW CHAPTER 8.06 – DISPOSABLE PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS

WHEREAS, the use of single-use-carry-out disposable plastic shopping bags in the City of Soldotna (City) burdens the environment, endangers wildlife, and has been shown to be harmful to bodies of water and problematic for solid waste management; and

WHEREAS, to decrease the number of littered disposable plastic shopping bags in the City, it is necessary to restrict general use; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of all residents to restrict the use of single-use disposable plastic shopping bags; and

WHEREAS, plastic carry out bags do not biodegrade, create problematic environmental issues and frequently escape from trash containers and landfills creating a burden on residents and the City for clean-up;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLDOTNA, ALASKA:

Section 1. Soldotna Municipal Code Title 8 is hereby amended by the addition of a new Chapter 8.06, Disposable Plastic Shopping Bags, to read as follows:

Chapter 8.06 – DISPOSABLE PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS

Sections:

- 8.06.010 Purpose
- 8.06.020 Definitions
- 8.06.030 Single-Use Plastic Disposable Shopping Bag Prohibited

8.06.010 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to reduce the generation of waste from single-use plastic disposable shopping bags.

8.06.020 Definitions

Any word, term, or phrase not defined in this section shall have its ordinary and common meaning. The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section:

"Affected Establishment" means any retail or commercial business facility located inside the City of Soldotna that sells goods or prepared food directly to consumers including but not limited to grocery stores, pharmacies, retail stores, and restaurants.

"Single-Use Plastic Disposable Shopping Bag" means a bag made from any plastic (including plastics marked or labeled as "biodegradable" or "compostable") or any material not marked or labeled as "biodegradable" or "compostable" that is neither intended nor suitable for continuous reuse and that is less than 2.25 mils thick, designed to carry customer purchases from the seller's premises, except for: bags used by

customers inside stores to package bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candy, or small hardware items, such as nails and bolts; bags used to contain dampness or leaks from items such as frozen foods, meat, or fish, flowers or potted plants; bags used to protect prepared foods or bakery goods; bags provided by pharmacists to contain prescription drugs; newspaper bags, laundry, or dry cleaning bags; or bags sold for consumer use off the seller's premises for such purposes as the collection and disposal of garbage, pet waste, or yard waste.

8.06.030 Single-Use Plastic Disposable Shopping Bag Prohibited

- A. No affected establishment may provide to any customer a single-use plastic disposable shopping bag for the purpose of carrying away goods from the point of sale.
- B. No person may distribute single-use plastic disposable shopping bags at any city facility or any event held on city property.
- C. Any violation of this chapter shall be considered a minor offense punishable as provided in SMC 1.08.080.

Section 2. That SMC 1.05.080 Minor Offence Fine schedule is hereby amended to include the following offenses and fines:

Soldotna Municipal Code Reference	Offense	Fine
08.06.030	Distribution of single use, plastic disposable shopping bags.	\$300

Section 3. This ordinance shall become effective November 1, 2018.

ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL THIS 11TH DAY OF APRIL, 2018.

Nels Anderson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michelle M. Saner, MMC, City Clerk

Yes:
No:
Absent:

TO: Mayor Anderson and Members of the City Council
FROM: Lisa Parker, Council Member and Linda Murphy, Vice Mayor
DATE: March 28, 2018
SUBJECT: Ordinance 2018-013 - Amending Soldotna Municipal Code Title 8 – Health and Safety to Establish a New Chapter 8.06 – Disposable Plastic Shopping Bags

Over the past few years Soldotna has significantly improved the aesthetics of our community, including improvements to signs, upgrades to city parks and the addition of more festivities for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

Recently, the Gganitchit Dena'ina Youth Council sent an invitation to come to the viewing of the documentary "Bag It", discussing the effect plastic has on our waterways, oceans, and bodies. Based on the request from the Youth Council and Soldotna residents, Vice Mayor Murphy and I request you support the introduction of Ordinance 2018-013 – Disposable Plastic Shopping Bags.

The proposed ordinance was adapted from the ordinance enacted by the City of Wasilla. Unlike many ordinances that are effective immediately, the proposed ordinance has an effective date of November 1, 2018 giving businesses the opportunity to make the transition.

While there are countless reasons for cutting down on the number of plastic bags, some primary reasons for elimination include:

1. They are unsightly – how often do we see the bags blowing across the road, in a parking lot or floating down the Kenai River.
2. They are bad for wildlife – plastic bags can choke or poison birds, fish and animals. Particularly vulnerable are marine life, like our Cook Inlet Beluga Whales.
3. They take years to decompose.

The City Manager and I have had the opportunity to visit with some of the local businesses to discuss the ordinance. While there has been no outright opposition, businesses have requested the ordinance not take effect immediately, giving them and their staff time to inform shoppers of the upcoming change. Additionally, we've discussed working with the Soldotna Chamber of Commerce to deliver the message.

Informational:

City of Hopper Bay currently has a plastic bag ban in effect.

City of Bethel in 2012 enacted a law that requires all plastic bags be biodegradable. The biodegradable capabilities vary from each biodegradable bag type and some do not biodegrade in the Alaska climate.

City of Homer enacted a law banning plastic bags in August of 2012, with an effective date of January 1, 2013. In February of 2013 a citizen's referendum was filed and in October of 2013 the voters of the City of Homer repealed the plastic bag ban.

City of Wasilla enacted a law banning plastic bags in January of 2018, with an effective date of July 1, 2018.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Summary of Changes from Version O to Version R

HB 264 - *"An Act prohibiting disposable plastic bags; relating to a minimum price for paper and other shopping bags; relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; and providing for an effective date."*

1. Title: from "An Act relating to a fee for disposable shopping bags; relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; relating to the recycling of disposable shopping bags; and providing for an effective date." to "An Act prohibiting disposable plastic shopping bags; relating to a minimum price for paper and other shopping bags; relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags; and providing for an effective date."
2. Removes the fee for single-use bags and creates a ban for single-use (disposable) plastic bags.
3. Establishes a minimum 10-cent fee for all other bags (plastic, reusable). The retail seller keeps 100% of this fee. Its purpose is to prevent a loophole that would allow store to give away thick plastic bags in lieu of single-use plastic bags.
4. Removes the exemption for communities of less than 5,500 persons.
5. Removes the 18-pound weight capacity requirement for reusable bags.

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON

TO: CSHB 264(L&C), Draft Version "R"

- 1 Page 3, line 25:
- 2 Delete "July 1, 2019"
- 3 Insert "January 1, 2020"

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON

TO: CSHB 264(L&C), Draft Version "R"

- 1 Page 1, lines 1 - 2:
2 Delete "**relating to a minimum price for paper and other shopping bags;**"
3
4 Page 1, lines 10 - 11:
5 Delete "and the minimum price established in (c) of this section do"
6 Insert "does"
7
8 Page 2, lines 12 - 24:
9 Delete all material.
10
11 Reletter the following subsections accordingly.
12
13 Page 2, line 28:
14 Delete ", (c), or (d)"
15 Insert "or (c)"
16
17 Page 3, line 21:
18 Delete ";"
19 Insert "."
20
21 Page 3, lines 22 - 24:
22 Delete all material.

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON

TO: CSHB 264(L&C), Draft Version "R"

1 Page 1, line 2:

2 Delete "**relating to the sale of reusable shopping bags;**"

3

4 Page 2, lines 25 - 26:

5 Delete all material.

6

7 Reletter the following subsections accordingly.

8

9 Page 2, line 28:

10 Delete ", (c), or (d)"

11 Insert "or (c)"

From: Jennifer Johnson
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Support HB 264 bag ban & fee
Date: Thursday, March 8, 2018 3:08:42 PM

To the House Labor and Commerce Committee Members,

I support a plastic bag ban & fee.

Plastic bags are a blight on our environment and a health concern for our wildlife.

For the aesthetics of our beautiful land, the well being of our flora and fauna, as well as the health of our children and their future, I support reducing or getting rid of the plastic entirely.

Including a fee is the only way to encourage those that do not already bring their own bag to do so or at least to reduce their dependency on plastic bags.

Please pass a carryout plastic bag ban and include a fee for any paper or additional weight plastic bags not banned.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Johnson
Jjnri@msn.com

From: Kathryn Carssow
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: plastic bag ban
Date: Thursday, March 8, 2018 2:34:05 PM

Dear Representative Kito and Committee members,
I respectfully request that you take action to protect our fragile coastal ecosystem on which all Alaskans are deeply dependent by passing legislation to ban single-use plastic bags.
Kathryn Carssow
Homer, Alaska

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: Alyson Pytte
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Cc: [Lisa Delaney](#)
Subject: H.B. 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 11:28:00 AM

Dear members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee,
I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 264, which would ban single use plastic bags in large stores.

Like most Americans, I am pretty addicted to convenience. But I can say from experience that switching to reusable bags is a trivial and transitory inconvenience when weighed against the many benefits of reducing plastic bag use. I would appreciate the opportunity to pay a small fee to buy a paper bag when I forget a reusable bag, and this bill would encourage stores to provide that option.

Plastic bags litter the highways and hang from trees and are an eyesore in our beautiful state, which depends on tourism. Plastic bags also kill birds and other wildlife and leach chemicals into our environment. When you stop to think about it, manufacturing a plastic bag to use once and throw away is a crazy waste of resources and an insult to American ingenuity. I believe there is broad support for this bill (look at Wasilla!) because we face so many intractable problems, but here is a small and common sense thing we can do as a community to make Alaska cleaner and safer.

Thank you in advance for your support for this important bill.

Alyson Pytte
6120 Romania Drive
Anchorage, AK 99516

From: Irene Bortnick
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Cc: [Lisa Delaney](#)
Subject: H.B. 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 11:28:07 AM

Thank you Representatives Kito and Josephson for sponsoring and chairing the bill to ban plastic bags in Alaska. While we cannot role back the clock, now that we know the impact of plastic, we must do all we can to protect our environment and wildlife. Without a ban, it is hard to get individuals to change their ways.

Sincerely,
Irene Bortnick

From: alex glass
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: HB 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 4:24:28 PM

Dear Representative Kito Ms. Caitlyn Ellis,

I am writing in support of HB 264. As a resident of Anchorage, I often see plastic bags flying around town, littering our streets, and sometimes even clogging our sewer drains. I think the passing of HB 264 (banning of plastic bags less than 4 mils statewide) is a VERY critical step forward in the process of eliminating plastics from our environment. Alaska is known as "the last frontier". Frontier (noun) meaning *the extreme limit of settled land beyond which lies wilderness*. If we do not take the steps necessary to keep our land free of pollutants, it will no longer be considered "wild" or sacred as we Alaskans know it to be. There are already many parts of the oceans that plastic has reached that humans haven't.

It is a dangerous choice to maintain the same environmentally devastating habits that we have been for so long. I thank you for introducing this bill into Alaska legislature and I will do my best to help spread the importance of it so that we may see it passed.

Sincerely,

Alexandria Glass
1910 E 72nd Ave Apt 2
Anchorage, AK 99507

From: janet myers
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: HB264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 12:19:58 PM

I am an Anchorite and I strongly support the banning of plastic bags or minimally a tax on them. They are a hazard, bad for wildlife, bad for the planet and the only people profiting from them are the guys that own the companies that make them.

Jan Myers
9631 Elmore
Anchorage Ak 99507!!!!

From: Janet Colon
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: H.B. 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 4:37:07 PM

Please ban single use plastic bags. Let's be an example for the rest of the world

Janet Colon

From: Katherine Schake
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Support for Bill 264 - proposed Alaska Single Use Plastic Bag Ban
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 1:17:17 PM

Hello,

I am writing as an Alaskan resident in support of Bill 264 because I think it is important to ban plastic bag use in Alaska. It is in the best interest of everyone to do so because this plastic is incredibly harmful to the marine and terrestrial ecosystem on which we all depend - especially our wild-salmon fisheries.

Thank you for your time,
Katherine Schake
907-205-2035
Anchorage, AK

From: [LIO Sitka](#)
To: [Rep. Sam Kito](#)
Cc: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Public Testimony on HB264 for House Labor and Commerce Committee
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 12:59:49 PM

Dear Chairman Kito and the entire House Labor and Commerce Committee ,
Please accept this written public testimony from Sitka constituent Libby Stortz,
libbystortz@gci.net via the Sitka LIO.

HB 264 Ban Single Use Plastic Bags: Dear House Labor and Commerce
Committee members: I urge you to support and pass this bill. Single use
plastic bags are bad for fish, wildlife and our health. The imposition of a fee,
which encourages stores to purchase thicker plastic bags or paper for
customers is laudable and an important step forward.

My personal preference would be for the 10 cent fee to be shared between
stores, who must buy some kind of bag for consumers anyway, and with the
Alaska State departments whose work is focused on environment, wildlife and
the health of Alaskans. I'd like to see stores urged by the State to offer
reuseable cloth bags at the store's price to their customers. Stores would be
able to keep their profit or pay themselves back for offering cloth bags.

Thank you for taking my comments,
Libby Stortz,
Sitka

Thank you!
Ken Fate,
Sitka Legislative Information Officer
907-747-6276

From: Princess Lucaj
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: Bill 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 3:23:40 PM

Dear AK Legislature Representatives,

I am writing in support of Bill 264 to ban single use plastic bags. I think this is a long overdue measure to help us keep Alaska beautiful and reduce the amount of waste that ends up in our landfills.

I hope you expedite this bill through so we can all celebrate come Spring break up when we do our clean up days! ;-)

Mahsi' choo!
Princess Lucaj
Fairbanks, AK 99701

From: Cat Coward
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Cc: [Lisa Delaney](#)
Subject: H.B. 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 3:45:31 PM

Dear Representatives,

This is an email in support of HB 264. Single use plastic bags are detrimental to our environment, and they are wasteful. Many communities have successfully reduced the use of plastic bags without placing a strain on community members.

Please use this email as my public testimony in the support of HB 264.

Thank you,
Catherine Coward
6221 Farpoint Dr
Anchorage, AK 99507

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lee Goodman
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Subject: HB 264
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 1:29:32 PM

Dear members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee,
I am writing to express my support for House Bill 264, which would ban single use plastic bags in large stores.

Without question these bags are extremely convenient, but the convenience is far outweighed by the damage these bags pose to our wildlife and environment, to say nothing of the visual blight they so often create on the beauty of Alaska.

Like so many Alaskans I would be happy to pay a small fee to buy a paper bag when I forget a reusable bag, and this bill would encourage stores to provide that option.

Plastic

bags litter the highways and hang from trees and are an eyesore in our beautiful state, which depends on tourism. Plastic bags also kill birds and other wildlife and leach chemicals into our environment. When you stop to think about it, manufacturing a plastic bag to use once and throw away is a crazy waste of resources and an insult to American ingenuity. I believe there is broad support for this bill (look at Wasilla!) because we face so many intractable problems, but here is a small and common sense thing we can do as a community to make Alaska cleaner and safer.

Thank you in advance for your support for this important bill.

From: Ceal
To: [House Labor and Commerce](#)
Cc: [Lisa Delaney](#)
Subject: YES on HB 264!
Date: Friday, March 9, 2018 4:30:17 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

The Alaska Climate Action Network wholeheartedly supports HB 264. We have a very long way to go to effectively manage the unregulated dumping of plastics in our oceans and this bill is a much needed start.

Plastics are a highly disturbing and intractable problem that harms marine mammal and bird populations, our ocean ecosystems, fisheries and human health in irreparable ways that scientists are only beginning to understand.

Please see this 2017 Annual Review of Marine Science report on Plastics in the Marine Environment for an overview of our current understanding:

<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-marine-010816-060409>

As the nations greatest coastal state, Alaska should rightfully take leadership on this critical oceans issue. We hope HB 264 is just the beginning of a comprehensive and innovative state-led campaign to protect our oceans, wildlife and public health.

Sincerely,

Ceal Smith
Co-founder

On behalf of our 1200+ followers and grassroots partners across Alaska.

~~~~~  
Ceal Smith, MSci

[Alaska Climate Action Network](#)

[Join AK CAN! on Facebook](#)

Eagle River, AK  
907.952.7472

**From:** Krista Christensen  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** HB 264  
**Date:** Friday, March 9, 2018 11:51:31 PM

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I support HB 264, the plastic bag ban. Please move this bill forward with expediency.  
Thank you,

Krista Christensen  
Writer & Teacher  
Fairbanks, Alaska, USA

**From:** John DeLapp  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** Please support HB 264  
**Date:** Friday, March 9, 2018 7:40:44 PM

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I am writing in support of HB 264. Please ban or tax the use of non reusable plastic bags.

John A DeLapp  
2241 Foxhall Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99504

Sent from my iPad

**From:** Jennifer Davis  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** Alaska Single Use Plastic Bag Ban  
**Date:** Friday, March 9, 2018 9:47:55 PM

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I strongly support the HB 264 proposed Alaska Single Use Plastic Bag Ban.

Jennifer Davis

**From:** Dawn Groth  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** HB 264  
**Date:** Friday, March 9, 2018 6:26:51 PM

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As an Anchorage resident, I was amazed that Wasilla banned plastic bags before Anchorage. Right? We all hear how Anchorage is the smarty pants and Wasilla is the bedroom community, then BANG, Wasilla passes legislation to ban plastic bags. WAY TO GO WASILLA! And Anchorage is the home of all these environmental groups!!! What the heck Anchorage?!

I was impressed with Wasilla, now I encourage you to respect the will of our Wasilla Alaskans and support HB 264 to ban the bags! Don't let big outside industry tell you what to do. Your people have spoken.

Congrats for standing up for yourselves, Wasilla! Congrats for taking the lead on plastic bags.

Dawn Groth  
Anchorage AK 99504

**From:** Diana Z  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** Ban plastic bags!!  
**Date:** Saturday, March 10, 2018 12:09:21 PM

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To whom it may concern:

Have you seen how much plastic is in the ocean? Do you care about future generations of your children and animals? Are we that selfish that we can't adapt to doing something for the bigger picture just because we (meaning 'you') are lazy? I have been using my own reusable bags for over 20 years. Disposable plastic bags are not necessary. As a resident of Palmer, I will continue to fight close-minded people. Keeping reusable bags in our cars and at our front doors is a learned behavior that anyone can adapt to-not hard at all, so no need to worry about BUYING disposable plastic bags. People shop @Costco without bitching just fine.

If you can't see the bigger picture, we will go to the stores individually and get their support. Show some concern for the environment rather than for personal profit please. The world is in a crisis and we need to step up.

Sincerely,

Diana Zitmanis

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Gina Lindsey  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** HB 264 support  
**Date:** Saturday, March 10, 2018 3:00:01 PM

---

I am a registered voter in Alaska and I support this bill to remove single use plastic bags.

Thank you,  
Gina M Lindsey  
Anchorage

3/10/2018

Homer is a beautiful small town where we do not see the ugly reality of plastic. The oceans are not depositing tons of plastic on our beaches. We have many people who sweep for garbage daily. We do not see the reality, but all the plastic that is blowing around on our streets does make it to our (the world's) oceans.

Daily, I see plastic that has been stopped ~~by~~ in its flight by a tree or a ditch. This is visible and ugly. But, what is worse is all the plastic that freely blows into our ocean. Out of sight. Hiding where we can not see its deadly damage.

Homer prides itself on being a caring aware community, yet when it comes to going out of our way to protect our oceans, our environment, we have only just begun to be aware.

We refused to ban plastics in the past because - We didn't get to vote our voice on it. Not because it was a bad idea.

I say, It is time to vote. All of us. Vote for the awareness that our world's oceans are in danger. As a result a

chain of reaction that will lead  
directly to us. ~~own~~

Robert Copeland McKinney

Homer, Alaska

Please enter into the record my  
**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

Name: Deborah Boege Tobin, Ph.D.  
Representing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill No./Subject HB264  
Committee: HLAC  
Date of Hearing: 3/9/18

To whom it may concern,

I fully support House Bill 264 to impose a fee of \$0.20 per bag for use of single-use plastic bags. I have personally dissected/necropsied many marine mammals and a few birds wherein I & my Biology students at the Kachemak Bay Campus of Kenai Peninsula College - University of Alaska Anchorage have found numerous pieces of plastic debris, including plastic bags inside and outside/tangled around these organisms. Plastics will remain on our planet for 400+ years, and worse yet they break down into small (microplastic) pieces that are eaten by many filter-feeding organisms that bivalves and fish consume, which many of us humans later consume. This accumulation and bio-magnification in our bodies disrupts our endocrine systems, mimicking several types of hormones, especially sex hormones. Our beautiful Alaskan coastlines and <sup>inland</sup> environments are littered w/ plastics which is detrimental to our tourism, our physical & mental health, and that of our marine, aquatic (freshwater) & terrestrial organisms. Please enact this bill and fee on single-use plastic bags and what will hopefully be a first step in banning them altogether like the state of Hawaii and many other communities world-wide. Sincerely,  
Deborah Tobin

March 9, 2018

I am in full support of a total ban for all single use plastics in Alaska. Alaska is my home. I have spent countless hours with my family, friends and Girl Scouts cleaning up my hometown, other Alaskan communities, beaches, and parks both urban and rural. A majority of the trash collected is single use plastic.

Just the other day I saw plastic bags blowing across the mud flats of the Homer Spit; one of the world's major shorebird stopovers each spring as the birds their way North to reproduce. The trash negatively affects both the birds and the annual Shorebird Festival that provides the Homer community with an economic boost.

Bioaccumulation is a major effect of plastic in the ocean. Persistent Organic Pollutants such as trace insecticides, pesticides, toxic pollution and industrial chemicals are absorbed by a microbe biofilm that the plastic surface provides; as plastic is ingested by animals the Persistent Organic Pollutants are absorbed into the animals fatty tissue increasing in toxicity as they progress up the food chain. Ultimately, these toxic materials impact the health of Alaskans, as we depend on the food our state provides. In addition, to Bioaccumulation marine animals can starve to death when they ingest plastic instead of nutrient rich plankton. Entanglement can hinder an animal's ability to evade predators, acquire food, or reach the surface for oxygen. Entanglement can also cause injury, and infection that often results in death.

While working as a teacher in the Bering Strait another teacher and myself worked with our students to create an underwater camera, which we submerged in a crab hole in order to observe the marine life. Stills were taken under water, and the photos were posted. It took the fourth graders to point out that what the adults thought were jelly fish were, in fact, the single use plastic bags from honey buckets that had been dumped into the ocean. This marine debris was found in the same hole that King crab had been gathered.

In 2011, Plastic outweighed plankton 40:1 in the Pacific Gyre. February 20, 2018; LATimes quote "If we don't cut back now, there will eventually be more plastic than fish in the ocean." Alaskans depend on fish. If you go to the Pratt Museum, you will see a display featuring the stomach content of marine birds that had died due to the overwhelming blockage of plastic in their systems. This display is not only a poignant representation of the plastic issue that plagues Alaska, it is also a very old display. A young woman I know mentioned the display when I asked her about her thoughts on the plastic ban. The display was featured in the local museum twenty years ago, when that young woman was just a toddler. This proves that the issue of plastics in our local community, and our marine community, is long overdue to be addressed. Alaska needs to reduce plastic pollution.

It is time as a State we take action to minimize our plastic waste. Plastic pollution is detrimental to the health of Alaska. We need a total ban of single use plastic for Alaska.

Brenda Dolma Homer, Alaska 99603



**From:** Joanie Kirk  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** HB264  
**Date:** Saturday, March 10, 2018 3:47:26 PM

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Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of HB264.  
My name is Joanie Kirk, I am a business owner in Palmer, Alaska and a naturopathic doctor.  
I support HB 264 (amended as a ban).

Thank you

Joanie Kirk ND  
907-707-3604  
[www.joaniekirknd.com](http://www.joaniekirknd.com)

**From:** Alexandra Lemos  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 264  
**Date:** Saturday, March 10, 2018 2:11:23 PM

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Good day,

My name is Alexandra Lemos and am writing in support of HB 264. There are many reasons to support the ban of plastic bags which of course include the environmental impact of not only plastic bag production, but the inevitable consequence of its post grocery holding life. Additionally, there is the community support aspect which cannot be denied. I came from a place that also had this ban and a 10 cent paper bag fee and while it was a little bit of an adjustment I was completely comfortable paying for paper and eventually bought and started bringing my own. It's nice to see other shoppers also with their reusable bags and it creates a sense of community that would have otherwise not existed. There is also the progressive statement that this holds and if you pay attention to areas that are doing well financially there is a correlation between attractiveness to business and progressive politics. I believe this ban would be a good step towards solidifying Alaska's economy by attracting talent and business.

In summary, I don't think it's anyone's right to have free bags and plastic is a terrible threat to the natural habitat of beautiful and majestic Alaska. Thank you kindly for reading.

Take care,

Alexandra Lemos - Anchorage

**From:** Ceri Lloyd  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** Support of the plastic bag ban  
**Date:** Saturday, March 10, 2018 2:02:37 PM

---

I am writing to show my support of HB 264, the plastic bag ban. I was very proud of Wasilla when they voted in their ban, and I would love to see the entire state do the same thing. Our state of Alaska is beautiful and we must work together as Alaskans to keep it that way. Our proximity to the ocean is one of the many reasons I feel this ban needs to take place in our state. The production and use of single use plastic bags to carry home our groceries is an unnecessary convenience. Residents of other cities both in the US and outside of our country have shown that they are able to get by without them, and have accustomed themselves easily to the change, even if they were not primarily in support of it.

I have been working with other locals to establish free reusable bags to be made available in stores in Wasilla, and we are eager to do the same throughout the entire state. There are initiatives already in place and working in Homer to meet the bag need, and it has proven successful. I support this ban and hope that others will do the same!

Thank you,  
Ceri Lloyd



2050 VENIA MINOR ROAD  
PO BOX 86  
ST. PAUL ISLAND, ALASKA 99660



March 12, 2018

Dear Rep. Sam Kito and Caitlyn Ellis,

My name is Dr. Lauren Divine and I am the Co-Director of the Ecosystem Conservation Office for the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, the federally designated name used to identify our community of Unangan, also known as Aleuts, residing on St. Paul Island in the Pribilof Islands of Alaska. I also serve as a permanent participant representative to the Marine Litter Expert Group within the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment for the Arctic Council. I am writing to you to express my support of HB264, the bill that proposes a plastic bag ban across Alaska, which will not only play a large role in reducing solid waste production across the state but will also protect freshwater and marine resources by reducing the amount of debris that could potentially pollute these resources. Globally, approximately 8 million metric tons of plastic debris enters the ocean annually. As plastic does not biodegrade, this means that millions of tons of plastic debris are accumulating in our oceans, being carried long distances by strong currents. One projection suggests that there will be more pieces of plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050. The following information about the harmful impacts of plastic debris and pollution comes from the Plastic Pollution Coalition (<http://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/>):

- **Plastic never goes away:** Plastic is a durable material made to last forever, yet 33 percent of it is used once and then discarded. Plastic cannot biodegrade; it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces.
- **Plastic piles up in the environment:** Americans alone discard more than 30 million tons of plastic a year; only 8 percent of it gets recycled. The rest ends up in landfills or becomes 'litter', and a small portion is incinerated.
- **Plastic spoils our groundwater:** There are tens of thousands of landfills across the globe. Buried beneath each one of them, plastic leachate full of toxic chemicals is seeping into groundwater and flowing downstream into lakes and rivers.
- **Plastic poisons our food chain:** Even plankton, the tiniest creatures in our oceans, are eating microplastics and absorbing their toxins. The substance displaces nutritive algae that creatures up the food chain require.
- **Plastic attracts other pollutants:** Manufacturers' additives in plastics, like flame retardants, BPAs and PVCs, can leach their own toxins. These oily poisons repel water and stick to petroleum-based objects like plastic debris.
- **Plastic affects human health:** Chemicals leached by plastics are in the blood and tissue of nearly all of us. Exposure to them is linked to cancers, birth defects, impaired immunity, endocrine disruption and other ailments.
- **Plastic threatens wildlife:** Entanglement, ingestion and habitat disruption all result from plastic ending up in the spaces where animals live. In our oceans alone, plastic debris outweighs zooplankton by a ratio of 36-to-1.

- **Plastic costs billions to abate:** Everything suffers: tourism, recreation, business, the health of humans, animals, fish and birds—because of plastic pollution. The financial damage continuously being inflicted is inestimable.

That debris ends up on the shorelines of communities like mine, St. Paul Island, an island community in the Bering Sea where waste management is a complex issue. We not only manage waste created directly on island, but also must manage the waste that washes up on our shorelines. Not only is the debris unsightly, it also poses a serious threat to our wildlife. Our northern fur seal population is particularly at risk of entanglement in debris, and we have disentangled many fur seals over the past several decades. North fur seals are important components of the St. Paul Island ecosystem and are also a critical subsistence resource for our community. Because northern fur seal populations have declined drastically over time, each individual is critical for the population's health and recovery. Losing an individual through entanglement or some other harm from marine debris would be devastating for the future of the northern fur seal population. We have conducted formal large scale marine debris cleanups for at least two decades now, collecting over 10 tons of debris from a fraction of our shorelines in May 2017 alone.

The St. Paul Island community recognized the harm plastics were causing to the ecosystem and came together as a community to ban plastic shopping bags from the local store. This occurred in the late 1990s, and since that time community members have adapted to the lack of plastic shopping bags by using reusable shopping bags or cardboard boxes. It did not pose a burden on the community, and in fact earned a great deal of support when the ban was proposed. In the time since the plastic bag ban, waste management has gotten easier, and community members have noticed a stark difference in litter around the neighborhood, with no plastic bags flying around the island as litter.

Any steps towards reducing single-use plastics in the state of Alaska would bring us closer to protecting our freshwater and marine resources from the harms of plastic pollution. This includes the plastic bag ban proposed in HB264. Please consider this bill in order to protect our water resources and the future of our ecosystems and wildlife across Alaska.

Sincerely,



Lauren Divine

Co-Director, Ecosystem Conservation Office

Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

**From:** Mary A. Vavrik  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce: Rep. Andy Josephson](#)  
**Subject:** HB 264  
**Date:** Sunday, March 11, 2018 7:29:46 PM

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I am writing to express my support for HB 264 to ban plastic bags in the Municipality of Anchorage. Plastic bags are an environmental hazard to wildlife, ruin the beautiful scenery of Alaska when they are flying around in the wind, and unnecessarily fill up landfills.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Mary A. Vavrik  
907-345-3934  
[mvavrik@gci.net](mailto:mvavrik@gci.net)  
11930 Northern Raven Drive  
Anchorage, Alaska 99516-1935

**From:** [Rep. Andy Josephson](#)  
**To:** [Caitlyn Ellis](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 264 Shopping Bag Fees & Recycling  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 4:15:03 PM

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**From:** Mark D. Spivey <mds318@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 12, 2018 7:23 PM  
**To:** Rep. Harriet Drummond <Rep.Harriet.Drummond@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>  
**Cc:** Rep. David Guttenberg <Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 264 Shopping Bag Fees & Recycling

To the Honorable Reps. Josephson, Drummond, and Guttenberg,

I am writing regarding House Bill 264 and I wanted to let you know that you have my full support! I am newly transplanted to Fairbanks (8 months) and plastic bag waste has been a huge grievance with me. There is absolutely no reason to have such waste when reusable shopping bags are superior in every way.

My biggest concern with the HB 264 is enforcement. The 20¢ per bag is a user fee, and the collection and enforcement may dissuade potential supporters as too much trouble. It might be simpler to ban them outright with a 6 month stay, allowing people plenty of time to buy reusable bags and let retailers exhaust their supplies.

Any way I can help support this bill, just let me know!

v/r,

Mark D. Spivey  
907.687.2071  
Fairbanks

**From:** Kate and Steve  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** HB 264  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 10:11:18 AM

---

Dear committee members,

Please support the HB264 ban on plastic bags.

Plastic bags waste important oil resources and pose a long term environmental impact. Even as they slowly break down they become a potential killer of more and more small animals upon which our ecosystem depends.

Kate Wedemeyer  
3708 Checkmate Drive  
Anchorage



Virus-free [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)



March 17, 2018

The Honorable Sam Kito, Chair  
House Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK, 99801

RE: Support for Ban on plastic bags

Dear Chairman Kito and Members of the Committee:

Mid Valley Recycling in Big Lake, Alaska, Mat-Su Borough, is a group of volunteers that operates a recycling site at the Mat-Su Borough's Waste Transfer Site. We have been in existence for about five years.

In addition to actually operating a recycling site, the group promotes recycling through outreach to the community and educational events. We strongly support the reduction of single-use plastic grocery bags. The bags are a hazard to wildlife, to our environment and to our own personal health.

Plastic bags know no boundaries. They move down waterways and into the ocean. It is very likely that a bag which escapes in the wind in the Mat-Su Borough will end up clinging to wildlife in the Bering Sea. The bag can easily be ingested and cause the death of the animal. A statewide ban will greatly reduce the spread of these toxic bags. We encourage the passage of HB 264.

Thank you for your consideration,

Patricia Fisher, Vice President  
Mid Valley Recycling



Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS)  
PO Box 876464  
Wasilla, Alaska 99687  
P: 907.745.5544  
F: 907.745.5569  
[www.valleyrecycling.org](http://www.valleyrecycling.org)

Dear Chairman Kito and Members of the Committee:

I am Mollie Boyer, the Executive Director of the Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS). We provide the recycling program for the Mat-Su. As part of our program we also provide education on recycling.

VCRS supports changing the HB 264 legislation to legislation that will ban single use plastic grocery bags under 4 mils.

Four years ago, 3 graders attending a fieldtrip at our recycling center began our education on the deadly impact of plastic bags in the Mat-Su. After they learned which plastics they could recycle at our center and what plastic is made from one of them raised their hand and shared that earlier that day as part of their fieldtrip they had gone to the UAF Experiment Farm. During the presentation by the Fish & Game researcher at the farm they were shown nine plastic bags that were pulled from a caribou's stomach that morning. This was the first we heard about plastic bags in the stomachs of local animals so I called the researcher. He shared that this is normal and he goes out every morning to pick up any plastic that has blown into the corralled area. Two of their caribou have died from blockage from plastic. He has pulled plastic bags out of moose stomachs too but has not had a moose die from the blockage that they know of. The type of ruminant that caribou are make them more vulnerable.

Plastic bags do not decompose they photodegrade, breaking down into smaller pieces of plastic when exposed to the sun. In the darkness of a stomach, the bags cannot even break down. Third graders educated us on plastic being a problem on the land and in our neighborhoods not just in our oceans.

As we have shared their story, we have been learned and continue learn more about animals dying from blockage from plastic. Agate Inn, a local bed & breakfast with reindeer, let us know that they have had a least two reindeer die from blockage. The veterinarian that did the necropsies on their reindeer shared that this is not uncommon, regularly the necropsies he does on young animals, including pets, he identifies that they have died from blockage from plastic.

We have learned about local dogs and a horse that have died from blockage from plastic bags. A nurse shared that while working in the Emergency Room she has treated young children, toddlers, with blockage from chewing on and sucking in plastic. The news of negative impacts on local animals continues to come forward. Unfortunately, deaths from plastic can only be confirmed if a necropsy is done. And necropsies are expensive.

From the impacts on state economics via the fishing industry and tourism, to livestock and subsistence, to the health of our pets and our children, the negative impacts from plastic bags are real. Unfortunately, the bags are not just unsightly they are deadly in our environment.

This is an important issue for the state of Alaska to address for the long-term good of all Alaskans. Thank you for working on this legislation to reduce the negative impact of single use disposable grocery bags in Alaska and Thank you to the children for raising our awareness – let's show them that we can do better.

Sincerely,

Mollie Boyer  
Executive Director  
[director@valleyrecycling.org](mailto:director@valleyrecycling.org)

*Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS) is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible charitable organization - EIN #92-0174289.*

Our vision is to establish the greater Mat-Su Borough as a model zero landfill community.

Our mission is to operate a cutting edge Resource Recovery & Training Park while educating, training, and fostering partnerships to reduce, reuse, and recycle for the long term good of all.

**From:** Carol Montgomery  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** HB 264  
**Date:** Monday, March 19, 2018 10:23:39 AM

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March 16, 2018

The Honorable Sam Kito, Chair  
House Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK, 99801

RE: Support for Ban on plastic bags

Dear Chairman Kito and Members of the Committee:

The Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition is a citizen's group that promotes recycling, and the reduction of single use plastic grocery bags. Recently, Wasilla passed a ban on plastic bags, and the Ordinance had strong community support. The Ordinance was approved 5 to 1 by the Wasilla City Council. Written public comments were 47 to 1 in favor, public comments were 2 to 1 in favor, and a poll by the Frontiersman newspaper showed 57% support for the ban.

A tax on single use plastic bags has less support among the public, and does not eliminate these bags from the environment. The Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition supports banning single use grocery bags, rather than taxing them.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carol Montgomery

Chair Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition Plastic Bag Committee

[Anclm4@mtaonline.net](mailto:Anclm4@mtaonline.net)

**From:** Kate and Steve  
**To:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Subject:** Plastic Bags  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 12:42:52 PM

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Please pass out the plastic bag ban for passage by the full house. Plastic bags are a waste of oil resources, a big litter problem and after break down pose a hazard to large and small animals important in our ecology.

Thank you for considering this issue.

Kate Wedemeyer  
3708 Checkmate Drive  
Anchorage



Virus-free, [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

I am contacting you in support of HB 264. I appreciate this time to share my concerns with you.

I am a Matanuska Susitna resident and have been over the past 10 years. I own a home in Wasilla and know all about the wind here in the valley. That being said I drive the highway to Fairbanks a couple times a week for work. The valley is not the only place to experience high winds in this state so I think it is time to get the state involved in the ban of plastic bags statewide.

I want discuss the economics of this state. Our oil business is not a dependable re source and has declined over the years, forcing many layoff and unemployment. We have **tourism** and the **fishing industry** left. We need to look at how much these plastic bags affect each of these industries because this affects us all in Alaska.

There is so much information available about the plastic in the oceans and water ways. I feel everyone would agree we need to keep the plastic out of our water ways. Fish and other sea life are dying by plastic netting and garbage floating in the water .The longer the plastic remains in the water the smaller it gets, but it NEVER completely goes away. The fish are eating it and in turn we are going to be eating it.

Our salmon industry is already in trouble .Commercial fishermen have the times they fish shortened and local rivers and streams are being closed due to low fish count. Fishing opportunities are shrinking. When I have friends come up to Alaska they want to go fishing. I have to tell them rivers are off limits due to low fish runs. Soon people will not want to take charters out. This will affect many Alaskans that depend on that income to support them all year.

I have heard about a couple coastal cities trying to do something to stop the plastic going in to the ocean and I applaud them. Cordova and Kodiak passed the bag ban and Homer reconsidering it. Smaller communities in the bush have banned bags so they don't have to see them blowing through the tundra out in the middle of no where while hunting. Little Glennallen took it on to get rid of the bags without any problems. These need to show our support and continue banning these obtrusive destructive single use bags. The harm they do is far worse than the inconvenience of remembering to bring your bag with to the store. We are creatures of habit and change can be hard but not impossible. This is not just a "tree hugger" problem, it is all Alaskans.

This state is supposed to be pristine beauty that the tourist will love and tell all their friends about, and want to come back. We want and NEED the income from them taking trains, buses and boats to see this beautiful state. We don't want them asking what those things are stuck in our trees and fences and along the roadsides.

We can all do our LITTLE part. It is a SMALL sacrifice to not have those plastic bags that are used over abundantly. I have heard the argument that there will still be plastic in the ocean but it has to start somewhere. There are countries so far ahead of us on this issue. Why is Alaska always the last one to do something? I URGE you to consider our industry in Alaska, as it affects all.

Marvin Wilson

I am writing in favor of House Bill HB264. My name is Annemieke Powers and I live outside Palmer. I am a small business owner and a civil engineer who has worked for the last 25 years or so in cleaning up contaminated sites.

My main concern with plastic bags is the long term economic and environmental impact of plastic pollution. Even when people properly dispose of these bags, too many bags blow out of the landfill, trash bins and other containers. They are very light and easily transported by water and wind, of which we certainly have an abundance in Alaska.

In my professional experience, it is cheaper to prevent pollution at the source than to pay for cleanup after the fact. A bag ban or, even more effectively, a bag fee does exactly that. It reduces pollution at the source. The World Economic Forum, in 2016, predicted that at current rates of pollution, the world's oceans would contain more plastic by weight than fish by the year 2050. This impairment to the oceans and fisheries could have a future economic impact to Alaskans. Protecting the salmon industry was one of the main reasons that Cordova successfully imposed a bag ban in 2016. And we have not even begun to assess the impact to the food chains of land animals. At the Mat-Su Experimental Farm plastic bags have already been found in the stomachs of caribou and moose. Alaskans rely heavily on the beauty and health of our land and waters for tourism, hunting and fishing and I think we should be proactive in protecting these resources.

Since plastic pollution is widespread and not the sole responsibility of any one person, corporation or nation, most clean-up costs will likely be borne by government entities which means it will eventually be paid for by the taxpayers. That means by you and by me. If we don't act, our kids and grandkids will bear an even larger cost as the pollution problem will not go away by itself, but will just grow. Banning or imposing a fee on these bags certainly won't eliminate all plastic pollution, but it is a very simple means of eliminating one, widely used pollution source. And it is something that can be controlled by the individual. I cannot control how companies package their goods, but I can control how I carry them from the store to my car.

Lastly in regards to the question of government overreach, to me, this bill does not affect what I buy, how much I buy, or where I shop. It does not affect what I do with the items I buy. It only affects how I carry the items out of the store. There are many ways to carry out your purchases and I think Alaskans are resourceful enough to come up with their own ideas. My household stopped using plastic grocery bags years ago and honestly, it has not been a hardship. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**From:** Carol Montgomery  
**To:** [Rep. Sam Kito; House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**Cc:** [Lisa Delaney](#)  
**Subject:** Support HB 264: comments on testimony of Matt Seaholm  
**Date:** Friday, April 6, 2018 1:25:17 PM

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The Honorable Sam Kito, Chair  
Alaska House Labor and Commerce Committee

RE: Support for HB 264  
Dear Chairman Kito and Members of the Committee:

Matt Seaholm, the Executive Director of the American Progressive Bag Alliance, headquartered in Washington D.C. gave testimony on April 4th, re: HB 264, a Bill intended to reduce the negative impact of lightweight single use disposable plastic shopping bags in Alaska. In his testimony he made several claims that we would like to address.

First, He claimed that bag bans had never delivered a significant reduction in waste and litter. He specifically claimed that San Francisco Bay litter increased after their bag ban. The litter audit he cited was conducted before that ban took full effect. A report from the city of San Jose found a reduction of 89% in the storm drain system, 60% in the creeks and rivers, and 59% in the City streets and neighborhoods following their plastic bag ban. In Ireland, a plastic bag tax led to a 95% reduction in plastic bag litter.

Here in AK plastic bag litter is irrefutable. Attached is a picture of litter in our community of Palmer. Hooper Bay, one of the first communities in AK to ban these bags, gave testimony that they have seen reduction in plastic bag litter, and decided to continue the ban because of it.

Mr. Seaholm also claimed that Denmark did not ban plastic bags, but in fact, Denmark was the one of the first European country to place a fee to reduce plastic bags. Mr. Seaholm also claimed that the government of Quebec claimed plastic bags had far less impact than any other bag, but, in fact, the City of Montreal banned thin plastic bags in 2017.

Mr. Seaholm made the distracting claim that reusable shopping bags made from cotton had a significant impact on human health and the environment. In fact, most of the reusable shopping bags, are made from polypropylene plastic, which, because they are reused, have the lowest carbon footprint of all alternatives.

When asked what he would propose as a solution to the plastic bag problem, he replied that recycling was the solution. Recycling is a good answer to a lot of our waste problems. Unfortunately, if a bag doesn't get in the recycling bin it doesn't get recycled. Lightweight plastic bags blow away so easily, they rarely make it to the recycling stream. At present, only 1-3% of these bags get recycled.

In summary, This testimony from American Progressive Bag Alliance demonstrates how statistics can be cherry picked to support the agenda of an industry that is selling plastic bags, and not the long term good of Alaskans. The indisputable facts remain that these lightweight single use disposable plastic bags are killing our local wildlife, our waterfowl, and getting into our salmon. As Alaskans we care about our food and our resources and we live here. Mr Seaholm, who works for a company in Washington D.C. does not live here and we do.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Patti Fisher, Carol Montgomery, and Mollie Boyer  
Mat-Su Zero Waste Coalition



"Together We Are Turning it Around"

Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS)  
PO Box 876464  
Wasilla, Alaska 99687  
P: 907.745.5544  
F: 907.745.5569  
[www.valleyrecycling.org](http://www.valleyrecycling.org)

To the Labor & Commerce Committee:

I am Mollie Boyer, the Executive Director of the Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS). We provide the recycling program for the Mat-Su. As part of our program we also provide education on recycling.

VCRS supports changing the HB 264 legislation to legislation that will ban single use plastic grocery bags under 4 mils.

Four years ago, 3 graders attending a fieldtrip at our recycling center began our education on the deadly impact of plastic bags in the Mat-Su. After they learned which plastics they could recycle at our center and what plastic is made from one of them raised their hand and shared that earlier that day as part of their fieldtrip they had gone to the UAF Experiment Farm. During the presentation by the Fish & Game researcher at the farm they were shown nine plastic bags that were pulled from a caribous stomach that morning. This was the first we heard about plastic bags in the stomachs of local animals so I called the researcher. He shared that this is normal and he goes out every morning to pick up any plastic that has blown into the corralled area. Two of their caribou have died from blockage from plastic. He has pulled plastic bags out of moose stomachs too but has not had a moose die from the blockage that they know of. The type of ruminant that caribou are make them more vulnerable.

Plastic bags do not decompose they photodegrade, breaking down into smaller pieces of plastic when exposed to the sun. In the darkness of a stomach, the bags cannot even break down. Third graders educated us on plastic being a problem on the land and in our neighborhoods not just in our oceans.

As we have shared their story, we have been learned and continue learn more about animals dying from blockage from plastic. Agate Inn, a local bed & breakfast with reindeer, let us know that they have had a least two reindeer die from blockage. The veterinarian that did the necropsies on their reindeer shared that this is not uncommon, regularly the necropsies he does on young animals, including pets, he identifies that they have died from blockage from plastic.

We have learned about local dogs and a horse that have died from blockage from plastic bags. A nurse shared that while working in the Emergency Room she has treated young children, toddlers, with blockage from chewing on and sucking in plastic. The news of negative impacts on local animals continues to come forward. Unfortunately, deaths from plastic can only be confirmed if a necropsy is done. And necropsies are expensive.

From the impacts on state economics via the fishing industry and tourism, to livestock and subsistence, to the health of our pets and our children, the negative impacts from plastic bags are real. Unfortunately, the bags are not just unsightly they are deadly in our environment.

This is an important issue for the state of Alaska to address for the long-term good of all Alaskans. Thank you for working on this legislation to reduce the negative impact of single use disposable grocery bags in Alaska and Thank you to the children for raising our awareness – let's show them that we can do better.

Sincerely,

Mollie Boyer  
Executive Director  
[director@valleyrecycling.org](mailto:director@valleyrecycling.org)

*Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS) is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible charitable organization - EIN #92-0174289.*

Our vision is to establish the greater Mat-Su Borough as a model zero landfill community.

Our mission is to operate a cutting edge Resource Recovery & Training Park while educating, training, and fostering partnerships to reduce, reuse, and recycle for the long term good of all.



March 9, 2018

The Honorable Sam Kito, Chair  
House Labor & Commerce Committee  
The Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau AK, 99801

**RE: Opposition to HB 264**

Dear Chairman Kito and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Progressive Bag Alliance (APBA), an organization that represents our country's plastic retail bag manufacturers and recyclers, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony to share our collective concerns with HB 264, which would impose a regressive 20-cent fee on disposable shopping bags or as is being reported in the media, be amended to ban all plastic retail bags.

We respect and applaud Representatives Josephson and Drummond and others for taking the goals of waste and litter reduction seriously. We share a common commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability. Both are critical to ensuring that we are protecting Alaska's natural beauty and are solid business principles.

As a waste reduction measure—and not just a fundraising bill—HB 264 is flawed. Bag bans and taxes may lead to fewer plastic retail bags being used, but similar policies have never delivered significant reductions in overall waste or litter. Policies that ban plastic bags push consumers to use *less* sustainable alternatives by comparison, and bag taxes often impose a regressive, inequitable burden on the most income-sensitive residents. That's a serious cost to consider for Alaska's hard-working families and fixed-income seniors who may incur higher costs to their grocery bills or be forced to buy more expensive alternatives to highly reusable plastic retail bags.

Beyond the economic impact for individual families and shoppers, HB 264 would require Alaska businesses—many of whom are APBA members' customers—to track, report and remit shopping bag tax revenue to the state. These additional reporting, training and compliance obligations will increase the cost of doing business in Alaska. Those higher costs may not be covered by the 25-percent allowance this bill designates for retailers and could end up being passed down as an additional consumer burden, on top of the initial regressive transaction fee and ban.

The proposed environmental benefits would neither relieve the burden on Alaska's fixed income families and seniors nor deliver meaningful outcomes on sustainability efforts. Environmental Protection Agency figures show plastic retail bags comprise just 0.5 percent of national waste, and national studies find the same bags account for less than one to two percent of litter.

When compared side-by-side to its alternatives, plastic retail bags are the most environmentally friendly choice. In relating the life cycle impacts of plastic to the alternatives – paper and cloth bags – University of Oregon professor David Tyler observed:

***"There are really good things about plastic bags—they produce less greenhouse gas, they use less water and they use far fewer chemicals compared to paper or cotton. The carbon footprint—that is, the amount of greenhouse gas that is produced during the life cycle of a plastic bag—is less than that of a paper bag or a cotton tote bag. If the most important environmental impact you wanted to alleviate was global warming, then you would go with plastic."***

Across the country, several states and cities have decided against implementing taxes and bans on plastic grocery bags because of the burden on the public and lack of environmental benefits. When Denver, CO explored, and ultimately rejected, a bag ordinance in 2013, the city's Office of Sustainability concluded, ***"Single-use bags of all types constitute well under one percent of all waste delivered to landfills... There are no substantiated claims that a bag fee will result in entirely eliminating even this tiny fraction of waste sent to landfills... Concluding that a bag fee will make a substantial dent in waste going to landfills is misguided."*** Likewise, voters in Durango, CO overturned a 10-cent bag fee in 2013, and in 2014, the Fort Collins, CO City Council repealed their local fee.

In Austin, TX, and Thurston County, WA, respectively, bag laws actually led to *more* landfill waste<sup>ii</sup> from reusable bags and doubled the use<sup>iii</sup> of paper bags that use more resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Matt Seaholm  
Executive Director, American Progressive Bag Alliance

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<sup>i</sup> Cooper Matt, [Paper or Plastic? The Answer Might Surprise You](#), University of Oregon Cascade College of Arts and Sciences interview with Professor David Tyler, Fall 2012.

<sup>ii</sup> Minter, Adam, [How a Ban on Plastic Bags Can Go Wrong](#), Bloomberg View, August 15, 2015

<sup>iii</sup> Thurston County Solid Waste, [Bag Ordinances: Six Month Implementation Report](#), February 3, 2015



**American  
Forest & Paper  
Association**

March 10, 2018

The Honorable Sam Kito, Chair  
House Labor & Commerce Committee  
120 4th Street, RM 3  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: Letter to Oppose House Bill 264 – Shopping Bag Fees and Recycling**

Dear Representative Kito:

On behalf of the American Forest & Paper Association<sup>i</sup> (AF&PA) and the Renewable Bag Council<sup>ii</sup> (RBC), we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective on legislation under consideration by the Committee on Labor and Commerce: House Bill 264 (HB 264), which would impose a 20 cent per bag charge on “disposable” bags.

We believe that paper bags should be excluded from measures to tax retail bags. The bag tax unfairly targets paper products, implying they are part of the environmental problem rather than the solution, and discouraging consumers from choosing paper bags that are recyclable, compostable, made of recycled material, and reusable. In fact, paper bags are the only shopping bags that are accepted for recycling at curbside in Anchorage. Responding to consumer demands, many retailers have already voluntarily transitioned to paper.

Government imposed product taxes increase costs for consumers and can create distortions in the free flow of recoverable materials for reuse in new products. Taxes and fees burden hard working citizens, increasing the cost of basic necessities and disproportionately impact those who are low-income.

Our industry achieves a consistently high recovery rate. In 2016, 67.2 percent of all paper consumed in the U.S. was recovered for recycling, and the recovery rate has met or exceeded 63 percent for the past seven years. Paper is the most-recycled material in the U.S. today. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, more paper (by weight) is recovered for recycling from municipal solid waste streams than glass, plastic and aluminum combined. In 2014, 96 percent of the U.S. population had access to community curbside and/or drop-off paper recycling services.

We look forward to continuing our work with the state of Alaska. Please feel free to contact Terry Webber, Director, Government Affairs, AF&PA at (202) 463-2732 or [terry\\_webber@afandpa.org](mailto:terry_webber@afandpa.org) for further information.

Representative Kito  
March 10, 2018  
Page 2

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Bartheld  
Vice President, Government Affairs

Cc:  
Representative Adam Wool  
Representative Andy Josephson  
Representative Louise Stutes  
Representative Chris Birch  
Representative Gary Knopp  
Representative Colleen Sullivan-Leonard

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<sup>i</sup> AF&PA is the national trade association for the forest products industry, representing pulp, paper, packaging, tissue, and wood products manufacturers, and forest landowners. Our companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources that sustain the environment. The forest products industry accounts for nearly 4 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures approximately \$210 billion in products annually, and employs about 900,000 men and women. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 states. In Alaska, the forest products industry employs over 1,200 individuals, with an annual payroll of over \$63 million.

<sup>ii</sup> The Renewable Bag Council (RBC) is comprised of manufacturers and converters of renewable, recycled, recyclable and compostable Kraft paper used for checkout bags at grocery and retail outlets throughout Alaska and across the United States. The RBC is affiliated with the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA). Visit the RBC online at [www.renewablebag.org](http://www.renewablebag.org) or follow us on Twitter @renewablebag.