

**Comments in Support of Proposed Ordinance Restricting Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bags in Stamford (Item No. LR30.019)**

My name is Martin Heslin. I have been a resident of Stamford for 37 years. I support the Proposed Ordinance Restricting Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bags in Stamford, and I urge the Legislative & Rules Committee to approve this item.

The proposed ordinance:

- promotes Connecticut's public policy prioritizing waste reduction and resource reuse and minimizing waste diversion to landfills;
- reflects Connecticut's public policy urging local governments, residents, and businesses to engage in waste reduction and resource reuse initiatives; and
- presents an effective local solution to the proliferation of single-use plastic bags that:
  - reduce the efficiency of recycling operations;
  - fill needed space in landfills with plastic compounds that can take hundreds of years to decompose and release toxins into the soil;
  - contribute to marine debris that entangle marine life and potentially threaten the marine-ecosystem food chain from ingestion of synthetic compounds in plastic, such as bisphenol A (also known as BPA) that has been shown to [stimulate](#) breast cancer cells.

## State of Connecticut Policy

### Best Practices in Waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling

It is the public policy of Connecticut to promote best practices in waste reduction, reuse and recycling and to minimize waste diversion to landfills.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed ordinance banning plastic shopping bags (Item No. LR30.019) effectively implements this state policy of waste reduction. Single-use plastic bags are difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> Effective July 19, 2016, Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection established a Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy ("CMMS" or "Strategy") to update the state's Solid Waste Management Plan. The Strategy is focused on diverting from landfill disposal, through source reduction, reuse and recycling, not less than sixty percent of the solid waste generated in the state after January 1, 2024. CMMS, p. 4.

The CMMS adopts the order of priority for managing solid waste that is codified in Connecticut General Statutes Section 22a-228(b). This "solid waste hierarchy" "favors source reduction and reuse, recycling, and composting, with remaining materials managed for energy recovery, and disposal in landfill as a last resort. This Strategy envisions moving up the Hierarchy, maintaining greatest preference for source reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting, while concurrently focusing on the development of state-of-the-art and emerging waste conversion technologies ...."



incorporate in recycling programs<sup>2</sup> and generally are disposed of in landfills but often enter waterways and contribute to marine debris as well. Curbing the proliferation of single-use plastic bags in our environment reduces the volume of plastic waste in landfills and in our waterways.

The proposed ordinance encouraging the use of reusable shopping bags (Item No. LR30.019) effectively implements the state policy of reuse. Making a new product requires materials and energy - raw materials must be extracted from the earth, and the product must be fabricated then transported to wherever it will be sold. As a result, product reuse is an effective way to save natural resources, protect the environment and save money. Reusable shopping bags promote these conservation and environmental goals and also reduce the amount of plastic waste that will need to be recycled or sent to landfills.

#### Engagement of Local Governments, Residents, and Businesses

It is also the public policy of Connecticut to engage local governments, residents, and businesses in achieving the state's waste reduction, reuse and recycling strategy.<sup>3</sup> Further, Connecticut's policy prioritizing reuse recognizes the need for initiatives at the municipal level "that directly promote reuse" (CMMS, pp. 16-17).

The proposed ordinance banning single-use shopping bags and promoting reusable bags effectively engages the City of Stamford, its residents, and its retail businesses in a joint initiative to implement the state's waste reduction and reuse strategy.

Indeed, the CMMS specifically decries the use of one-use products that the proposed ordinance banning single-use plastic bags seeks to address.

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<sup>2</sup>Plastic bags cannot be sorted from other materials by the machinery at recycling facilities, so they often get stuck in conveyor belts, jam equipment and delay the entire sorting system. This means that plastic bags don't belong in curbside recycling bins.

<sup>3</sup> The Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy states, "Achieving this vision will take shared and sustained commitment of all system participants." The Strategy specifically calls state and local governments, residents, and businesses to participate and contribute: "State and local governments and regional planning organizations must work together to plan, implement, and evaluate waste reduction and recycling programs. ... Residents and businesses must comply with mandatory recycling provisions and strive to utilize best practices for sustainable materials management." CMMS, p. 6

Furthermore, our consumption-based economy tends to encourage a “throw-away society” that is inconsistent with sustainable consumer choices, waste reduction, and reuse (CMMS, p. 12).

The 10-cent charge for a disposable carryout paper bag recognizes that paper bags, albeit recyclable and made of post-consumer recycled content, present environmental consequences that can be avoided by opting for the more sustainable choice of a reusable carryout bag. The 10-cent charge incents consumers to make the more sustainable choice.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In a “Frequent Question” section of its website, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides the following question and response:

**Does EPA support laws to ban or tax disposable bags?**

EPA supports strategies to reduce pollution at the source including eliminating the use of disposable bags and promoting the use of reusable bags. Decisions made by local or state governments to ban, tax, or eliminate particular products, such as bags, must be made on a case by case basis to minimize the environmental impact. The Pollution Prevention Act establishes a national objective for environmental protection: “[T]hat pollution should be prevented or reduced at the source whenever feasible.” Similarly, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act sets the order of preference for managing materials: source reduction, reuse, recycling, and disposal. We can all reduce waste through individual, everyday actions, beginning with the choice of reusable shopping bags. Reusable bags help to conserve energy; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; reduce marine debris by preventing pollution at its source; and avoid the environmental impacts to land, water, and air associated with extraction and production of raw materials. <https://waste.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/212349887-Does-EPA-support-laws-to-ban-or-tax-disposable-bags->

### **Personal Experience**

For the past several years, I have used reusable plastic bags when shopping at local supermarkets. I keep a supply of these bags in the trunk of my car and find it convenient to bring several into the store when shopping. From time to time, I clean the bags using a household antibacterial spray. Occasionally, I transport groceries in the single-use plastic bags provided by the store so that I can have a supply of such bags for reuse around the house. I realize that the proposed plastic bag ban will require that I purchase a supply of small plastic bags for such uses. I accept that requirement as a worthwhile tradeoff for the benefits of reducing the proliferation of single-use plastic bags in the environment.

For me, the reusable bags have become a potent symbol and reminder of the personal responsibility that I as a citizen have to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials to decrease household waste generally. A ban on the use of single-use plastic shopping bags in Stamford would promote a culture of environmental awareness throughout the city.

**From:** [Paul & Christina](#)  
**To:** [Board of Representatives](#)  
**Subject:** Reusable bag ordinance October 1st - Vote Yes  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 25, 2018 9:53:20 AM

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Dear Stamford Representatives,

I am writing to ask you to vote in favour of the Ordinance next Monday, October 1st, to ban disposable plastic bags from checkouts in Stamford and also to levy a 10c charge on disposable paper bags.

The aim of the ordinance is, **firstly, to reduce plastic pollution** in Stamford and Long Island sound and **secondly**, and as importantly, to encourage people to **bring their own reusable bags** to the store and not just to switch from plastic to paper bags.

### **Firstly, why would you ban plastic bags?**

The negative effects of plastic on the environment are well documented: The UN announced in December 2017 that plastic pollution is creating a 'planetary crisis' for our oceans

- It is estimated that 8 Million tonnes of plastic reach our oceans every year – that's 1 rubbish truck of plastic a minute entering the ocean.
- This plastic is responsible, among other things, for the death of sea turtles and whales.
- Our seas are becoming filled with micro plastics - as plastic does not fully degrade it just gets smaller.

Fish unknowingly ingest these micro plastics and then we eat the fish. So we end up eating these micro plastics too.

This is bad for our oceans and bad for us.

Already many cities and towns in the US have introduced bans on plastic bags, including locally Westport, Larchmont, rye and Greenwich in 2018.

### **Secondly, why would you levy a charge on disposable paper bags?**

A ban on plastic bags is not enough -we want to encourage people to **bring their own reusable bags**

and **not** have people simply changing over to paper bags as paper production –

- requires water and energy
- uses many polluting chemicals

- generates significant emissions  
and
- paper is not recyclable indefinitely.

The levy is an incentive to encourage people to take their own bags with them to the store. People still have the choice to buy a disposable bag, but if they do, it reflects the true cost of the bag. As the saying goes, there is no such thing as a free lunch, there is similarly no such thing as a free bag at checkout, somebody has to pay for it, usually the customers who pay higher prices in store.

Cities who have already brought in a 10 cent charge on paper bags, along with a ban on plastic bags include, Los Angeles, Portland Maine, Washington DC, Brownsville Texas, Montgomery County, and recently Bedford village, NY has brought in a similar ordinance. What happens when the charges are brought in, is that most people quickly change their habits and start to bring their own bags to the store. Such a change would be good for the environment and good for Stamford city that faces a bill for recycling this year of \$700,000.

Let Stamford, a leading city, join with these other US cities and **number one** ban plastic bags and **number 2** levy a charge on disposable paper bags.

I urge you to vote YES on October 1st.

Best regards,

Christina McCann

**From:** [Alexandra Eisenberg](#)  
**To:** [Board of Representatives](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Plastic Bag Ban  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 25, 2018 9:13:39 PM

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I recently learned I should send emails to this address so they reach all reps. Please see my support of the PLASTIC BAG BAN WITH FEE in the email chain below.

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**From:** Alexandra Eisenberg <hello\_alex@hotmai.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 25, 2018 5:14 PM  
**To:** J.R. McMullen; cpia@stamfordCT.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Plastic Bag Ban

Thank you for your detailed response, I greatly appreciate hearing the reasons behind your opinion.

At this point, we seem to have different positions on this subject. However, I do believe that there probably are many things we do agree on. For example, one of the characteristics I respect in Americans is the ability to take personal responsibility, and not take "hand outs" due to laziness and wastefulness.

From my perspective, single use plastic and paper bags are a hand out, that gets paid for by everyone either through marginally higher prices at the store, higher refuse costs by the city, and devastating environmental impact.

Like any change in habit, some people need a nudge in the right direction. I am sure most people have many bags they could take to the store - they just need to have it be as much of a habit as taking their wallet. My husband struggles with this, but he is making progress.

If everyone was taking their own bags to the store, this ban would be unnecessary.

As for kitty litter, I would suggest having a small garbage can with a lid, lined with a plastic bread bag, or cereal box bag, or carrot bag, etc, and use a scoop to remove the waste into this bag and empty it when the bag is full. As you can imagine, I never bring home the single use plastic bags from the store, yet I still find an abundance of receptacle bags for yucky waste.

Personally, I do not use produce bags and I freeze all my food in Tupperware. If I do need a plastic bag, I reuse a bread bag. My children take their lunch to school in reusable metal containers, which I am sure has saved me money over the years. It is all doable and probably cheaper in the long run than constantly buying and throwing away.

Thank you for your time.



All the best,  
Alexa Eisenberg

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**From:** J.R. McMullen <jrmcmullen.stamford18@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 25, 2018 12:16 PM  
**To:** Alexandra Eisenberg  
**Subject:** Re: Plastic Bag Ban

Hi Alexa,

I can't vote for the plastic bag ban and I don't think it is Stamford's place to impose a 10 cent charge for paper bags. If State legislators want to go down this path then that is where I believe the laws should be enacted. The state is in the position to impose something like the bottle deposit on plastic and paper bags if that is really what residents want. I do not believe it is or we would have more residents using recyclable bags today.

Anecdotally I was in the Grade A yesterday talking to Representative Jonathan Jacobson about this topic while we were standing in the checkout line. Jon is a big proponent of the ban. He was the only person, in all of the lines, using the reusable bags. My wife and I usually shop on Sundays after church and I have been watching and counting. Most people (including me) will take the reusable bags when the Grade A is giving them out for free but very few use them on a regular basis. I just don't believe residents are there yet. I don't think a very small minority should be able to force their perspective on everyone else. As far as our plastic bags go, they do get reused to clean the cat's litter box. If we didn't have the grocery store plastic bags we would be buying something similar to contain her waste.

Say we take this all the way, would you support a ban on plastic sandwich bags, produce bags, dry cleaning bags, or freezer bags? All have been discussed as next steps.

On Tue, Sep 25, 2018 at 11:17 AM, Alexandra Eisenberg <[hello\\_alexahotmail.com](mailto:hello_alexahotmail.com)> wrote:

Good morning - you had helped me get some city trees removed from earlier in the year, I wanted to thank you again.

Also, I am writing to show my strong support for the proposed Plastic Bag Ban in addition to the 10 cent charge for recycled paper bags. I feel strongly that the charge is necessary to help the public shift away from dependency on single use bags.

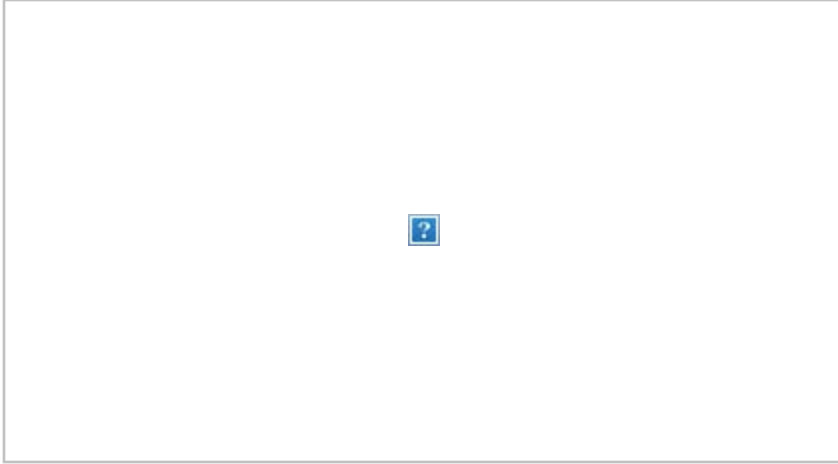
Please consider voting yes on October 1.

All the best,  
Alexa Eisenberg  
203.981.9125

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Trying to help other people at all times,

J.R. McMullen  
(203) 979-8360  
Representative District 18  
165 Slice Drive  
Stamford, CT 06907



**From:** [Joan Kranz](#)  
**To:** [Board of Representatives](#)  
**Subject:** Bring Your Own Bags!  
**Date:** Thursday, September 27, 2018 10:38:29 PM

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Dear Stamford Board of Representatives,

Although I am in favor of limiting the use of plastic bags because they dirty our streets, clog storm drains, contribute to unnecessary landfill use and jam municipal recycling equipment, I too have been questioning how people will collect their wet and non recyclable garbage without them. I am also hoping that residents who receive food stamps will be exempt from the 10 cent charge for paper bags.

Putting non recyclable garbage into a reusable covered plastic pail is a reasonable solution. After the weekly collection, the pail can be washed, dried and used again. Pails such as these are available at the Dollar stores. Local markets can start stocking them at a reasonable cost. Sterilite actually manufactures its pails in the U.S.A.

Stamford residents, no matter their economic status, are concerned about the future of their children. The move to "Bring Your Own Bag" and limited use of plastic bags, are two steps that lessen our reliance on fossil fuels.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Joan Kranz

**From:** [byogreenwich](http://byogreenwich.org)  
**To:** [Board of Representatives](#)  
**Subject:** Stamford Carryout Bag Ordinance (LR30.019) - Board Vote on Monday Oct 1st - Please vote YES and reconsider plastic bag thickness  
**Date:** Thursday, September 27, 2018 8:24:18 PM

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Dear Stamford Board of Representatives,

Thank you for being the first big city in CT tackling plastic pollution.

Your YES decision on the Stamford Carryout Bag Ordinance (LR30.019) Board vote on Monday Oct 1st has an enormous positive impact on the Long Island Sound, the progressive communities you have blossoming and the solid neighborhoods that are the foundation of your city.

Prior to voting yes, we would ask that you reconsider your plastic bag thickness specifications and increase it to at least 4-6mil, if not match Greenwich's 12 mil.

It has been our most recent experience, with a large plastic bag supplier, in rolling out the Greenwich Reusable Checkout Bag Ordinance September 12, 2018 that the plastic bag industry is ready to usurp the lower plastic bag mil thicknesses as soon as the ordinance is passed. I believe Westport also finds this to be true.

In a recent conversation, Greenwich had to notify a plastic bag supplier that the bags they substituted into two grocery stores were non compliant (they were 2.25 mil), the plastic bag supplier's reply was "what mil thickness do we need to get to?".

It is with great respect and admiration that we support your decision to ban plastic checkout bags and place a 10cent fee on paper bags.

Thank you again for your consideration and we are looking forward to a great outcome for Stamford.

Best to you,  
Jeanine Behr Getz on behalf of BYOGreenwich

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[HOME](#) | [BYO Greenwich](#)



**From:** [Eleanor Blomstrom](#)  
**To:** [Liebson, Alice](#); [Zelinsky, John](#)  
**Cc:** [Board of Representatives](#); [Rafael Moquete](#); [Amanda Leatherman](#); [sherri.reed8@yahoo.com](mailto:sherri.reed8@yahoo.com); [Jennifer Forman](#); [Marnin Forman](#); [Lauren Scopaz](#); [Angelica Gorrio](#); [Nicole Carpenter](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed carryout bag ordinance, Oct 1 vote  
**Date:** Friday, September 28, 2018 2:40:19 PM

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Dear Representative Liebson and Representative Zelinsky,

Thank you for your dedication to District 11, which includes Strawberry Hill School.

I'm writing today along with several parents at Strawberry Hill to urge you to vote yes on the proposed disposable carryout bag ordinance on Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. Below, you can see the letter I read aloud on behalf of all of us as part of the public comments on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

I remember meeting you both at the update about the school construction, among other events, and welcome your openness to working and connecting with members of the school community. Please feel free to reach out.

Best regards,

Eleanor Blomstrom, 510-541-4189

Dear Stamford Board of Representatives,

We support the proposed ordinance banning non-biodegradable plastic carryout bags, and we welcome Stamford's leadership on this issue. In addition, we support the proposed ordinance with the inclusion of the 10 cent charge for customers who require a recyclable paper bag. The bag charge is an incentive to consumers to bring their own reusable bags. The charge should go back to the store to pay the cost of the post-consumer content recycled paper bags.

Importantly, we agree that any customers participating in SNAP, WIC or other governmental food assistance programs should be exempt from the bag charge.

As citizens of a community on the Long Island Sound, we have a responsibility to safeguard the health of our local waters. Moving away from single use plastic bags will also cut down on litter in Stamford that can clog sewers, mar the beauty of our beaches and injure or kill wildlife. As global citizens, we should also adapt our consumer choices to minimize our impact on oceans and ecosystems globally. By 2050, plastic is expected to outnumber fish in the oceans, and the chemicals in plastics may end up in fish that we eat.

Taking a reusable bag can become the norm. Making that effort will teach our children and others that we value their future and will show that change is possible.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Blomstrom  
Amanda Harper-Leatherman  
Angelica Gorrio  
Nicole Carpenter  
Paul Lombardo  
Rafael Moquete  
Jennifer S Forman  
Marnin Forman  
Sherri Reed  
Lauren Scopaz

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Eleanor Blomstrom  
Email: [eblomstrom@gmail.com](mailto:eblomstrom@gmail.com)  
Mobile: +1-510-541-4189  
Twitter: @ehb20

**From:** [samira fink](#)  
**To:** [Board of Representatives](#)  
**Cc:** [John Bolognino](#); [Tammy Agrebi](#); [Aleksandra Moch](#); [Alexa Eisenbert](#); [Christina](#); [eblomstrom@gmail.com](#); [Elizabeth Barry](#); [Fabiola Tambini](#); [Hilary Starks](#); [hugh@hubar.com](#); [Jack](#); [Janet W](#); [Jeanine](#); [Jeanne Davis"](#); [Jennifer Henking](#); [judyllebeskind@optonline.net](#); [Julia Kemmerer](#); [leah dalton](#); [Lou Burch](#); [Ryan Hoak](#); [Sam Gordon](#); [samira fink](#)  
**Subject:** additional testimony for ordinance LR30.019: relevant news  
**Date:** Friday, September 28, 2018 9:15:47 AM

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Dear Stamford Board of Representatives,

ahead of Monday's vote on ordinance LR30.019 (the ordinance concerning non-biodegradable disposable carryout bags), please note that the State of New Jersey is considering a law that would arguably be the strictest in the nation.

Please let this serve as a reminder that you are not alone and that what is proposed in your ordinance LR30.019 is by no means out of the norm. The country is gradually changing for better and we believe that Stamford should not fail to act now.

Thank you all for your service to our community. We are respectfully asking you, one more time, to vote yes to the proposed ordinance on Monday, October 1st, 2018. We (BYO Stamford and supporters, will be there).

Kind regards,

Samira Sisksind  
(founder of BYO Stamford)

[https://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2018/09/plastic\\_bags\\_straws\\_and\\_styrofoam\\_all\\_banned\\_under.html](https://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2018/09/plastic_bags_straws_and_styrofoam_all_banned_under.html)

	<h3>Ban bags and straws? N.J. proposal would be the strictest ...</h3> <p>The governor wanted more, and that's exactly what lawmakers are trying to deliver. After Gov. Phil Murphy vetoed a bill that would've created a five-cent sales tax on plastic and paper disposable ...</p> <p><a href="#">www.nj.com</a></p>
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