

## Plastic Bag Legislation

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January 16, 2008

## Plastic Bag Tax

- Benefits
  - Reduced usage of plastic bags.
  - Direct consumer taxes raise consciousness about individual's role in dealing with recycling and waste management.
  - Unlike an all out ban, the tax provides funds to help clean up and recycle the plastic bags and support other environmental projects.
  - Gives the plastic bag manufacturing industry more time to recover/transition than a complete ban.

## Plastic Bag Tax

- Negatives
  - Increased use of paper bags which have a more harmful manufacturing process and more clear-cutting of forests.
  - Many consumers already reuse plastic bags for household jobs such as lining trash cans or picking up after a dog.
  - Increased sale of trash can liners and similar plastics to make up for loss of 'free' plastic bags.
- Alternative options: biodegradable plastic bags, reusable only, hybrid mix, status quo.

## Update on Sen. Joyce Plastic Bag Tax Bill

- Major provisions of the bill:
  - Imposes an excise equal to two cents per plastic carryout bag provided to customers.
  - Increases to fifteen cents per bag by 2013—increments of 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15.
  - Fifty percent of tax returned to stores that collected the excise for the purposes of:
    - improving recycling practices
    - recycling awareness within such stores
    - providing educational materials to encourage the reducing, reusing, and recycling of paper and plastic carryout bags
  - Fifty percent shall be credited to Commonwealth for related purposes consistent with the recycling plan of the solid waste master plan.

## Sen. Joyce Plastic Bag Tax Bill (cont'd)

- Introduced just before the session break at the end of 2007.
- Filed and introduced into the Senate; House must concur and then it will be assigned a number and sent to a committee for review.
- Impetus for the first Reusable bag day -11/14/07- aimed at highlighting the environmental advantages of using reusable bags.

## Plastic Bag Ban

- Benefits
  - 100% reduction in the use of standard plastic bags.
  - Encourages use of reusable bags.
- Negatives
  - Could cause a heavy reliance on paper bags.
  - Harms the plastic bag industry by providing less transition time and eliminating that portion of their business completely.
  - No revenue stream created to deal with remediation or sponsor programs.

### **Boston Plastic Bag Ban**

- Introduced by councilman Consalvo in April 2007
- Vote expected in the next several months.
- Measure supported by nine of the city's thirteen council members, likely to pass.
- Would ban use of carryout plastic bags in supermarkets, pharmacies and convenience stores within the city limits.

### **Final Thoughts**

- Ban or Tax could apply Paper and Plastic to facilitate fuller transition to reusable bags.
- Apply to in-store plastic bags (commonly used for fresh fruit and vegetables)
- Apply to bags used as packaging.