



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Reducing Disposable Bag Pollution

S.95 – Kaminsky

A.5753 - Englebright

An ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, the alcoholic beverage control law and the state finance law, in relation to establishing guidelines for carryout bag waste reduction

JUSTIFICATION

Between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year, and each of those bags is used for an average of 12 minutes. These bags, which never fully break down, end up in our landfills, parks, beaches, roadways, parking lots, and waterways. Plastic bags can also clog storm drains and lead to localized flooding. Manufacturing and shipping paper bags requires even more energy and water than plastic bags, and requires cutting down approximately 14 million trees every year. U.S. retailers spend approximately \$4 billion annually to purchase disposable bags, which is being passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices.

Municipalities are spending significant resources to dispose of plastic bags, and it is estimated that NYC alone spends \$12.5 million annually to dispose of plastic bags.

There are over 10 local governments across the state that have enacted bans or fees on disposable bags; however, NYS needs a statewide solution to bag pollution. Experience with bag reduction policies from around the country and globe demonstrates that a ban on plastic bags, along with a fee on paper bags, is the most effective way to reduce bag pollution and incentive the use of the sustainable alternative—reusable bags. A ban/fee hybrid policy enacted in Los Angeles County, CA resulted in a 94% reduction in the use of single use bags. New York State should enact a ban/fee hybrid bag policy to protect our environment, save natural resources, and save money.

SUMMARY OF KEY PROVISIONS

- Bans distribution of carryout plastic bags to consumers
- Requires retailers to charge fee for paper carryout bags and reusable bags (must charge at least 10 cents and not more than 25 cents)
- 20% of fee goes to retailer and 80% goes to NYS Environmental Protection Fund
- Consumers using SNAP or WIC are exempt from paying a fee
- Requires paper carryout bags to contain a minimum of forty percent post-consumer recycled content

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS

S.95- REDUCING DISPOSABLE BAG POLLUTION

CCE is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment

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