

HOW DO WE MOVE FROM PLASTIC & PAPER TO REUSABLE BAGS?

As citizens of Broome County, we can create *incentives* for the use of reusable bags. We can work to persuade village and town boards, Binghamton City Council and the Broome County Legislature to and pass legislation and resolutions that:

Encourage citizens and retail stores to switch from paper or plastic to reusable bags. (First Base: First six months)

Initiate a Reusable Bag Incentive ("RBI") of 5 cents for each plastic or paper bag that leaves the store. (Second Base: Second six months)

Increase the RBI to 10 cents a bag, with known and scheduled increases of an additional 10 cents for each of the three following years. (Third Base: Second and succeeding years)

HOME RUN!

Help our county and municipalities hit a home run for a sustainable environment, free from the waste and costs of non-reusable plastic and paper bags.



Add your signature to the
Reusable Bag Incentive
Watch Broome's carbon footprint
slide in to home plate!



PURPOSE

Earth is our home. Within our own home, wise use of finite resources improves our life and ensures a better future for our children.

Disposable bags, whether paper or plastic, consume oil and forest resources and pollute land, sea, and air. Disposable paper and plastic bags produce greenhouse gases and thus contribute to climate change. Reusable bags work as well or better than disposable paper or plastic and help support a sustainable environment.

COSTS OF DISPOSABLE PAPER & PLASTIC BAGS

Research published by the Environmental Protection Agency, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, as well as for several European governments, reveals that:

- The US consumes 100 billion plastic bags annually—using 12 million barrels of oil in their manufacture.
- Plastic bags (even compostable plastic) last up to 1,000 years in landfills.
- Most plastic bags are not recycled.
- Plastic bags pollute the oceans and threaten marine life including whales and sea turtles.
- Plastic bags litter streets, highways, streams, sewer and drainage pipes.
- Paper bags use more energy to produce and transport than plastic bags.
- Paper bags generate air and water pollution when manufactured.
- Both plastic and paper bags add to municipal waste collection and landfill costs that are passed on to citizens through landfill tipping fees and municipal waste collection charges.

BENEFITS OF REUSABLE BAGS

Reusable bags are available at most supermarkets for a one-time cost of about 99 cents—the price of a cup of coffee. Reusable bags:

- Can be used for years because of their long life-cycle.
 - Over their life-time, can eliminate the need for 1,000 or more plastic or paper bags.
 - Use less energy in production and produce less carbon dioxide.
 - Reduce solid waste disposal costs by reducing the municipal waste and landfill burden.
 - Do not threaten the oceans, streams, lakes, marine life or clog sewers and drains.
 - Do not litter road-sides, fields, streams and forests.
- “Make a statement” that we care about the environment and the future.

WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ARE DOING

Municipalities in North America, Europe, and Asia have or are considering action to reduce the use of paper or plastic bags and promote reusable bags.

- San Francisco and Palo Alto, California...Westport, Connecticut... and Brownsville, Texas have banned plastic grocery bags.
- Seattle has approved a fee on plastic and paper bags.
- Leaf Rapids, Manitoba Canada, is set to become the first Canadian community to ban plastic bags.
- Rossland, British Columbia, is considering a voluntary ban on plastic bags.
- Washington, D.C. is considering fees for both paper and plastic bags.
- China, South Australia, and Bangladesh have banned the distribution of free plastic grocery bags.
- Ireland levies a fee that has reduced use of plastic bags by more than 90 percent.
- New York City is considering a fee on plastic bags.