

Memorandum

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to prohibiting plastic carryout bags

Purpose of the bill:

This bill would amend the environmental conservation law to impose a ban on plastic carryout bags.

Summary of provisions:

Section 1 of this bill would add a new section 27-2708 to the environmental conservation law (ECL) to prohibit the provision of plastic carryout bags to customers at the point of sale beginning January 1, 2019.

Section 2 of this bill would amend section 27-2713 of the ECL, describing preemption.

Section 3 of this bill provides for an immediate effective date.

Justification:

Throughout New York State, plastic bags have become a ubiquitous sight on the landscape. They can be seen stuck in trees, as litter in our neighborhoods, floating in our waterways and are a general aesthetic eyesore of our environment. Single-use plastic bags are a detriment to the health of communities and the environment alike. From the significant recycling and disposal issues they pose to the litter and harm to wildlife they create, their negative impacts can be seen daily. These problems with single-use plastic bags are not only a statewide problem but are a national as well as international issue of concern.

Placing a ban on plastic carryout bags will result in a significant reduction of waste, lessening these environmental impacts. New York City alone estimates they would save \$12.5 million in disposal costs by reducing the number of disposable bags used. These costs do not include the significant cleanup costs to remove this plastic through litter collection programs and beach and ocean cleanup efforts. Plastic bag reduction further translates to reductions in the raw material and natural resources used to make, transport, and recycle the bags. Fewer carryout bags given away at checkout could result in decreased recycling and disposal costs for municipalities and municipal recycling facilities.

In New York State, a multitude of cities, towns or villages have enacted plastic bag bans. This proposal will provide an incentive for consumers to use reusable bags which have been shown to be an effective and appropriate means to carry products and goods. A statewide solution is necessary to eliminate the costly and negative impacts of plastic bags on New York's natural resources.

Prior legislative history:

This is a new bill.

Budget implications:

None known.

Effective date:

This act shall take effect immediately.