

October 22, 2018



Mayor Bennett:

On behalf of our entire Oregon membership and our many members, supporters, and volunteers in the City of Salem, the Surfrider Foundation would like to express our strong support for the City of Salem's plastic carryout bag ordinance. City staff did a great job of incorporating previous comments and putting together a comprehensive report for the continued hearing on the ordinance.

We are happy to submit further comments on Ordinance Bill No. 20-18. With respect to the "Options for Further Modification," we submit the following comments:

- We strongly support expanding the ordinance to include restaurants and to keep the current definition of "retail establishment," allowing this ordinance to more properly reach its purpose "to protect the environment, animals and human health..." If the ordinance were to be limited only to grocery and convenience stores, a large number of carryout bags would still be distributed in Salem.
- Keep the current definition of reusable carryout bag (*Reusable bag* means a bag made of machine washable cloth, woven synthetic fiber, or woven and non-woven polypropylene with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for long-term multiple reuses.) The definition of *carryout bag* should still include "thicker plastic bags (e.g., 2.25 mils or 4.0 mils)."
- If the ordinance is amended to include restaurants, they may be exempt from charging a pass-through cost. No other types of retail establishments should be exempt.

I respectfully request this letter be included as public comment for the October 22, 2018 City Council Meeting regarding the continuation of public hearing on Ordinance Bill No. 20-18

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Briana D. Goodwin".

Briana Goodwin
Oregon Field Manager
Surfrider Foundation

"Single-use Plastic Bags"

Salem City Council – September 10, 2018

My lifetime has seen the introduction and subsequent increase in our reliance on and the production of plastic film, accompanied by a similar increase in the scientific knowledge surrounding its effects.

We know the convenience it has introduced into our lives, and it is just that—convenience. But we also know the cost to the world—the world that supports our very lives and the lives of future generations. Why would we not go a little out of our way, trade a little of this new-found convenience for a healthy life and a healthy planet, maybe revert a fairly insignificant slice of our lives to the good ol' days. Or, better yet, focus on inventing a better alternative.

There's no one to pass this off to. We all need to step up and do our small part, reducing our reliance on the plastic bag. Please implement the ban. Thank you.

Judi Morris
5213 9th CT SE
Salem, Oregon
503 931-1329

Kali Leinenbach

From: Ralphie <lifefralphie@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2018 3:33 PM
To: Cara Kaser; Tom Andersen; Brad Nanke; Steve McCoid; Matthew Ausec; Chris Hoy; Sally Cook; Jim Lewis; citycouncil; Chuck Bennett
Subject: Input on plastic bag ban

There are easier, more impactful wins. This effort appears to be driven by lobbyist organizations helping to craft the ban language, and based on anecdotal accounts, feelings, and at best aggregate data that doesn't establish how we as a city impact that data.

According to an article on Statista, with data from The Wall Street Journal (<https://bit.ly/2JmXZZH>) the United States is 11th on the list of countries polluting the ocean with 0.30 million metric tons of mismanaged plastic waste and 0.11 million metric tons of plastic marine debris. How little of that is actually coming from little ol' Salem? Using the 0.30 million metric tons measurement, divided across the entire populations of the US, accounting for the population of Salem, that equates to 17.1 metric tons (not in millions) of mismanaged plastic waste for the entire city. That's 0.00015% of the US contribution of mismanaged plastic waste.

And those US total measurements are almost half as much as the next highest polluter, Brazil, with 0.50 and 0.19 million metric tons, respectively. And how much of itty bitty Salem can actually make an impact against the top polluter, China, with 8.80 million metric tons of mismanaged plastic waste and 3.53 million metric tons of plastic marine debris.

People have pointed out the increased potential for health impacting contamination from reusing unwashed bags. If people can be too lazy to properly dispose of a plastic bag, or return them to stores that have recycle bins for them, what makes you think they're going to wash their reusable bags? And what about the additional water used to wash them, if they do?

And what about lower income individuals and homeless people who can barely afford the food they get, let alone the extra cost of paper, or the higher initial cost of reusable (that they'd then need to wash, which, let's face it, they won't, which could spread illness).

And the added financial cost to businesses who have racks and turnstiles for plastic bag use, plus lots of bags left to use that would no longer be allowed? They will pass on the additional costs to shoppers. Also, studies show bans reduce sales within the ban zone and increase sales outside the ban zone. That's less money circulating within the economy of Salem (could translate to job loss/lower wages), and more money leaving for more plastic bag use in non-banned areas. I know I'll make an effort to shop where I don't have to remember to bring bags.

I know, I know... It'll feel good to do it, and Salem will get in the news for being "environmentally responsible" and "progressive". But for what benefit, and how much negative impact to things that actually do make a difference in Salem? All for something that statistically, won't amount to anything.

Let's do something more practical, cost-effective, and meaningful.

Sincerely,
Ralph and Angie Aitcheson

Kali Leinenbach

From: NoReply on behalf of marie.lainie@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2018 10:20 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Contact City Recorder
Attachments: ATT00001.bin

Your Name	Alaina Packer
Your Email	marie.lainie@gmail.com
Your Phone	9712832575
Street	303 Idylwood Dr. SE
City	Salem
State	OR
Zip	97302
Message	I support the plastic grocery bag ban. I am low income and hate any extra costs to my family in general but this is necessary and makes sense. People can try to remember to carry reusable bags to store or afford the fee. Thanks

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 10/24/2018.

Kali Leinenbach

From: John Forgard <jforgard@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 1:27 AM
To: citycouncil; Jim Lewis; Sally Cook; Chris Hoy; Matthew Ausec; Steve McCoid; Brad Nanke; Tom Andersen; Cara Kaser
Subject: Opposition Opinion to the Bag Ban

October 24, 2018

City Council

555 Liberty St SE RM 220
Salem OR 97301

Re: Grocery Bag Ban Proposal

Dear Mayor Chuck Bennett and City Council Members:

Last month I had the privilege to attend the city council meeting for a hearing on the proposed ban on the so-called "single-use" HDPE (high-density polyethylene) thin grocery bags. I was impressed by observing how all the council members are intent on serving the citizens of Salem, and looking out for our best interest. I was especially appreciative of the conversation the council had about properly informing the public about the proposed ban and its implications.

Regarding the proposed ban, at that time I was unprepared to offer an opposing view, and I would like to present such position here in this letter. I urge caution on the proposed ban, and to do so indefinitely until the opposing view is fully vetted, as I shall attempt to give a synopsis of here. But on the onset, it seems to me that a ban such as this is an over-reach of government, and as such a mechanism ought to be implemented whereby it can be sent to the people for a vote.

But be that as it may, I present here some the scientific and societal reasons to at least postpone the ban, if for no other reason but to allow the public to become fully aware of it and voice its opinion, whether for or against. Such a time frame would be in the realm of between one or two years to be fair the citizens of Salem and the surrounding areas. But to take the issue on its merits, I proceed.

There are studies and opinions that indicate the benefits of banning these bags may be dubious, ineffective, counter-productive, or actually harmful to the environment and public health. The following are excerpts and quotations from various sources. Please ponder these before casting your final vote affection the citizens of Salem and the surrounding area.

Since this letter to the council is admittedly for the purpose of marshaling arguments against the ban I will not be citing balanced data for the ban as it seems data in favor of it seems to be more than prevalent and available, (perhaps more by hearsay than actual facts). Not being a scientist myself, I would first like to cite David, Tyler Ph.D., Department Head of Inorganic, Organometallic & Polymer Chemistry at the University of Oregon who has some kind words for our friend, the grocery bag. Here are a few pull quotes from an interview with him by Matt Cooper, cited here:

Grocery Bags

- *"They produce less greenhouse gas [compared to paper or cotton tote bags]"*
- *"They use less water and fewer chemicals compared to paper or cotton bags."*
- *"If the most important environmental impact you wanted to alleviate was global warming, then you would go with plastic."*
- *"Paper is just typically considered a fairly polluting industry. Whereas the petroleum industry, where we get our plastics, doesn't waste anything."*

Styrofoam

- *"Styrofoam is a plastic. And the life-cycle assessments show that plastic cups are no worse on the environment than a paper cup."*
- *"The carbon footprint is smaller for Styrofoam than for paper cups."*
- *If your main concern is pollution or garbage reduction, you might not choose the Styrofoam cup even though its carbon footprint is lower.*

As my time is limited, I will proceed to enumerate key points of the opposition rather than take the time to word-smith them. I trust the information is clear and logical to you.

SUMMARY OF OTHER CITATIONS:

- **Paper Lasts Longer in Landfills**
[Casanova, loc cit.]

- **Plastic's Carbon Footprint Is Better than Paper or Cotton**

"Plastic has half the [carbon footprint](#) of the cotton and paper bags. It's counterintuitive to think that plastic could be less harmful than something natural, like cotton, but it is." [Schwanke citing Tyler]

"According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, paper bags generate 70 per cent more air pollutants and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags, because four times as much energy is required to produce them and 85 times as much energy to recycle them." [Cassanova]

BAG TYPES

Low-density polyethylene (LDPE) bags.

These are thick-gauged or heavy duty plastic bags, commonly known as ‘bags-for-life’, and are available in most UK supermarkets. The initial bag must be purchased from the retailer but can be replaced free of charge when returned. The old bags are recycled by the retailer.

Conventional High-density polyethylene (HDPE) bags.

This is the lightweight, plastic, carrier bag used in almost all UK supermarkets and often provided free of charge. It is a vest-shaped bag and has the advantage of being thin-gauged and lightweight. It has been termed “disposable” and “single use”

High-density polyethylene (HDPE) bags with a prodegradant additive.

This type of lightweight, plastic, carrier bag is made from HDPE with a prodegradant additive that accelerates the degradation process. These polymers undergo accelerated oxidative degradation initiated by natural daylight, heat and/or mechanical stress, and embrittle in the environment and erode under the influence of weathering. The bag looks like the conventional HDPE bag being vest-shaped and thin-gauged.

FOOTPRINT COMPARISONS

Edwards, Dr. Chris. Fry, Jonna Meyhoff. "Life Cycle Assessment of Supermarket Carrier Bags: A Review of the Bags Available in 2006." *Environment Agency*, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AH, ISBN: 978-1-84911-226-0, Feb. 2011,
[//assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291023/sch_o0711buan-e-e.pdf](http://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291023/sch_o0711buan-e-e.pdf)

Comparison of energy consumption equivalences of various bags juxtaposed with the HDPE bag. The numbers represent the number of times the other types of bags need to be reused in order to break-even on the energy consumed to produce them compared to the HDPE bag.

Type of carrier	HDPE bag (No secondary reuse) "Single-Use"	HDPE bag (if 40% are reused)	HDPE bag (if 100% are reused)	HDPE bag (If Used 3 times)
Paper bag	3	4	7	9
LDPE bag "bags for life"	4	5	9	12
Non-woven PP bag (stronger than LDPE)	11	14	26	33
Cotton bag (common reuseable)	131	173	327	393

"The paper, LDPE, non-woven PP and cotton bags should be reused at least 3, 4, 11 and 131 times respectively to ensure that they have lower global warming potential than conventional HDPE carrier bags that are not reused. "

If these numbers are accurate, the proposal to make paper bags available to the public (for a fee) would actually have a more adverse impact on global warming. Assuming global warming is a true phenomenon, (which is also appears dubious), encouraging the use of reusable cotton bags is *far* worse for the environment than the so-called "single-use" bag.

- **The "Single-Use" Bag is a Misnomer**

Additional findings by Edward and Fry regarding the reuse of "single-use" bags are listed below, showing that the so-called "single-use" bags are reused by the public 89% of the time. If so, then cotton bags would have to

be reused over 300x before even breaking even on the energy use factor compared plastic grocery bags. Below is the table of reuse applications for the plastic bag.

Reuse Applications	Percentage of respondents that reuse single use carrier bags in each application
Use as a bin liner in kitchen	53%
Use as a bin liner in other rooms	26%
Put rubbish into it then throw it away	43%
For dog / cat / pet mess	11%
Garden refuse	1%
Reuse for supermarket shopping	8%
Reuse for other shopping	10%
To store things at home	14%
For packed lunches	8%
Carry other things in when going out	4%
Put football / Wellington boots in	1%
Give to charity shops	1%
Keep bottles / cans in for recycling	1%
Other uses	2%
Do not have a use / discard	11%

(Note: I use mine for garbage, clothes, shoes, jars, storage...innumerable uses).

- **Increased Usage of Other Plastic Bags**

“When plastic bags given away for free in stores are banned, there's an increase in the types of plastic bags people can purchase to fulfill the same jobs as the free ones. For example, [The Guardian](#) reported a 400 percent increase in bin liner and large black garbage bag sales when the free plastic bags became subject to a 15 euro cents "plastax" in Ireland. It did decrease the use of plastic bags by about one billion per year, but that use was simply displaced in large part. The plastic in the replacement bags is thicker and a bigger threat to the environment than the thinner plastic in the free bags used in stores.[Schwanke citing Hickman, loc cit.]

- **Oregon is Especially Not Suited for Paper Bags**

[Does this need an explanation?]

- **Small Percentage of the Litter Problem**

“According to the [Reason Foundation](#), plastic bags aren't as big of a litter problem as it seems. They make up less than one percent of visible litter, don't block storm drains, make up just 0.4 percent of municipal waste, and don't even cut down on litter when banned (instead, there was an increase in litter in San Francisco after plastic bags were banned).” [Schwanke citing Christensen, loc cit.]

- **People Don't Clean Reusable Bags (E. Coli risk, et al.)**

The University of Arizona reported that 97 percent of people who use reusable bags are not aware that they should wash and sanitize them regularly. [Schwanke citing Harrison, loc cit.]

- **Reusable Bags Aren't Reused**

Bloomberg View reported surprising results that came after a plastic bag ban in Austin, Texas. Two years after the ban was put in place, people were "throwing away heavy-duty reusable plastic bags at an unprecedented rate." [Schwanke citing Minter]

- **HDPE Bags Are Reusable and Functional**

"Plastic bags are functional, durable, and reusable. Need to carry a lot of grocery bags at once? Plastic works better than paper for that. Want to keep your wet clothes or shoes separate from other items in your beach bag, or separate your shoes from your clothes in your luggage? Plastic bags work better, especially in the case of the wet items (paper could leak and/or rip, and cotton also leaks). Plastic bags generally won't leak unless there's a hole (not the case for paper and cotton), and water won't cause it to tear. You can reuse them in bathrooms, bedrooms, and home offices instead of buying separate bags for your smaller trash cans. If you want to clean up after your dog on a walk, you probably won't want to use your paper or cotton bags." [Schwanke]

"Reusing and recycling the thin plastic bags, which is possible because they are so durable and multi-functional compared to paper, cuts down on their carbon footprint even more." [Schwanke]

- **Economic Repercussions**

"A plastic bag ban wouldn't only affect the environment. It would have an economic impact as well. A report from the [National Center for Policy Analysis](#) found that stores inside ban areas in Los Angeles saw a six percent decrease in sales whereas stores just outside of those areas saw a sales growth of nine percent over the course of a year.

On top of that, jobs were lost. Stores in areas that did not allow plastic bags saw a 10 percent drop in employment. Employment outside the ban areas increased. Banning plastic bags on a large scale could also endanger at least some of the 30,000+ plastic bag manufacturing and recycling jobs in the United States." [Schwanke]

- **Reusable Bags Come From Overseas**

"The National Center for Policy Analysis says most (at least 95 percent) of the reusable bags are from overseas. Most of those are from China. Not only does that mean an increase in fuel needed to get them to the United States, but in many cases, the bags from China contain toxic chemicals that aren't permitted in the production of bags in the states. In addition to the concerns about fuel consumption and toxic chemicals, getting the bags from China and elsewhere means fewer bags are produced in the United States, which leads to fewer jobs." [Schwanke]

- **A Ban Could Be Detrimental**

"Banning plastic bags in lieu of cotton or paper could have a negative impact on the environment overall, not to mention the inconvenience of limiting reuse of those bags for everyday things like lining trash cans, protecting your belongings, or even cleaning up after your dog. In addition, banning plastic bags could leave a significant number of people without jobs and cost individuals, communities, and governments money, whether through the purchase of reusable bags or

educational programs for the public. Though it may sound like a positive change on the surface, banning plastic bags could actually be detrimental to the environment and the economy.” [Schwanke]

- **City councils are burdening businesses with needless accounting for bag fees**

(Note: isn't a government "fee" is just a sub-category of taxation – all monies a government requires of the public are taxes, regardless of the different types of classifications, are they not?)

QUOTING “BAG THE BAN”

“Bag The Ban” lists 4 key facts to consider [loc. Cit]

- **ENERGY SAVINGS:** Plastic bags require 70% less energy to manufacture and consume 96% less water than what's used to make paper bags.
- **DISPOSAL ADVANTAGES:** Once disposed, reusable bags take up to 9.3% more space than plastic bags in landfills.
- **REUSABLE COTTON BAGS AREN'T REUSED ENOUGH:** Standard reusable cotton grocery bags must be reused 131 times "to ensure that they have lower global warming potential than" a plastic bag used only once.
- **NO OIL INVOLVED:**

American-made plastic bags are produced from byproducts of natural gas, not oil.³

QUOTING “STOP THE BAG BAN”

The “Stop The Bag Ban” organization lists 25 Reasons why HDPE bags should not be banned [loc cit]

1. **Bag bans impose on the liberties and freedoms of businesses and citizens**
2. **City councils are now deciding which conveniences are allowable and which are not**
3. **Almost everything we make is “bad for the environment”, so why just one type of bag?**
4. **City councils have begun the practice of fixing minimum pricing for items**

5. **City councils are burdening businesses with needless accounting**
6. **Bag bans do not take into account the multiple reuses of bags**
7. **Bag bans punish everyone for the bad behavior of a few**
8. **Plastic bags are an insignificant portion of total waste**
9. **Bag bans are applied unfairly and without logic**
10. **Bag bans have no measurement of success, no review, and no accountability**
11. **Cities are spending millions on bag bans**
12. **Cities could solve the supposed problems for less than enforcing a new law**
13. **Businesses and citizens already had the option to use reusable bags prior to bag bans**
14. **Bag bans hurt the poor**
15. **Bag bans hurt businesses**
16. **Bag bans increase the number of paper bags used, which are worse than plastic**
17. **Bag bans result in businesses supplying even thicker plastic bags and higher customer charges**
18. **Bag bans increase costs to the people**
19. **Bag bans are never voted on by the people**
20. **Bag bans are often implemented out of emotion or because it seems to be trendy**
21. **Bag bans make a mockery of the city council process**
22. **No studies have ever shown that bag bans significantly improve the environment**
23. **Bag bans are being put into place to control people, not to actually accomplish anything**
24. **Bag bans hurt people taking public transportation, walking, or bicycling the most**
25. **A vocal minority is taking away the rights of the majority**

CONCLUSION:

In light of these objections raised by various groups, I urge the city council to indefinitely postpone the proposed ban on the HDPE plastic grocery bags. The benefits of such a ban for the people and environment seem to me to be dubious, expensive, and unwise at this time. But more importantly, it seems to me that a ban of this magnitude is outside the realm of the city's responsibility. But if it is indeed deemed to be of such a great importance, let there be a mechanism implemented which would allow the people of the city of Salem to vote

on far reaching issues such as this. Governments are installed and created by and for the people to serve the people. Government is not there to “educate” the citizens or engage them in “behavioral modification” (as described at the council meeting) as though government is our guardian or parent and we are its children--children that need to be taught and lead by superiors. Rather, the council is there to serve and do the bidding of the people. Such a ban as this seems to me to be government over-reach.

I do believe the council is acting on good faith, attempting to do its best to serve the citizens of Salem, and for this the council is to be commended. But on this issue, if the people cannot vote on such a ban, with its far reaching and unintended consequences, then it seems to me that no action should be taken by any government to implement policies such as this. Thank you for the this opportunity to express my opinion. I urge the council to vote no on the proposed ban.

Sincerely,

John E. Forgard
3035 Hollywood Dr. NE
Salem, Oregon 97305
(503) 364-4551
jforgard@gmail.com

CITATIONS

Casanova, Lilia. “Plastic bags should be managed, not banned.” *SciDevNet*, 17 May, 2012, www.scidev.net/asia-pacific/pollution/opinion/plastic-bags-should-be-managed-not-banned.html

“Many materials need to be managed if they are not to harm the environment. Indeed, if not properly managed, paper can be a worse polluter than plastic bags; it occupies nine times as much space in landfills, and does not break down substantially faster than plastic.

Australia, for example, has decided to reduce the use of HDPE (high-density polyethylene) thin plastic bags but not ban them because of the negative impact it would have on employment.”

“Banning plastic bags dismisses them as useless, and disregards their practical functionality, durability and affordability. It is the misuse and improper disposal of plastic bags that is causing harm to the environment, not the product itself. A total ban on plastic bags will only gloss over the lack of an effective environmental management policy in a given country. It will not save the environment from the ill-effects of a ‘throw-away’ mentality.”

Anon. “Bag The Ban”, *Novolex*, 2017, <http://www.bagtheban.com/learn-the-facts>

Anon. “Stop The Bag Ban”, [//stopthebagban.com/Why-bag-bans-are-wrong.php](http://stopthebagban.com/Why-bag-bans-are-wrong.php)

Clare, Jaclyn. “Reusable grocery bags may pose a public health risk.” *Newsire / News Releases, Cision*, 19 May [year not cited], www.newsire.ca/news-releases/reusable-grocery-bags-may-pose-a-public-health-risk-537744171.html

Christensen, Lance. “Plastic Bag Ban Hurts California’s Economy.” *Reason Foundation*. 13 Oct. 2014, [//reason.org/commentary/plastic-bag-ban-hurts-californias-e/](http://reason.org/commentary/plastic-bag-ban-hurts-californias-e/)

Environmental Protection Agency, “[Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts and Figures](#)”; April 2016

Environmental Protection Agency, "Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: 2014 Tables and Figures"; December 2016

Harrison, Jeff. "Reusable Grocery Bags Contaminated With E. Coli, Other Bacteria." *UANews* / The University of Arizona, 24 Jun. 2010, [//uanews.arizona.edu/story/reusable-grocery-bags-contaminated-with-e-coli-other-bacteria](http://uanews.arizona.edu/story/reusable-grocery-bags-contaminated-with-e-coli-other-bacteria)

Hickman, Leo. "Do we really need to ban plastic bags?" *Environment*, The Guardian, 10 Aug. 2009, www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/aug/11/plastic-bags-welsh-assembly/

Minter, Adam. "How a Ban on Plastic Bags Can Go Wrong: Good intentions at city hall, bad results for the environment." *Bloomberg Opinion*, 18 Aug. 2015, www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2015-08-18/how-a-ban-on-plastic-bags-can-go-wrong/

Ocean Conservancy, "Together for our Ocean: International Coastal Cleanup 2017 Report." 2017.

Schwanke, Crystal. "Why Should We Not Ban Plastic Bags." *Green Living / Environmental Issues*, LoveToKnow, [undated], [//greenliving.lovetoknow.com/Why_Should_We_Not_Ban_Plastic_Bags](http://greenliving.lovetoknow.com/Why_Should_We_Not_Ban_Plastic_Bags)

The Scottish Government, "Proposed Plastic Bag Levy - Extended Impact Assessment"; August 2005 and *The Advertiser*, "Bin line sales double nation average after plastic bag ban"; August 2011

Tyler, David, Ph.D., "Paper or Plastic? The Answer Might Surprise You." *Cascade: UO College of Arts and Sciences*, Fall, 2012, [//cascade.uoregon.edu/fall2012/expert/expert-article/](http://cascade.uoregon.edu/fall2012/expert/expert-article/)

U.S. Energy Information Administration, "How much oil is used to make plastics?"; April 2016

The Washington Post, "Tax data cast doubt on claims about declining use of plastic bags in D.C."; January 2014

The Washington Post, "Is D.C.'s 5-cent fee for plastic bags actually serving its purpose?"; May 2015