

# Reusable Bag Bill

*AN ACT Relating to reducing pollution from plastic bags by establishing minimum state standards for the use of carryout bags at retail establishments (HB1205/SBXX)*

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## Problems with plastics bags

### ***Plastic bags use up resources***

Bags are made from finite, nonrenewable natural **gas and oil resources**. We use these plastic bags for a few minutes and then discard them. Only **6% ever get recycled**.



### ***Plastic pollution impacts wildlife***

Plastic bags are one of the most **commonly-found items that litter** state roads, beaches, and other public spaces. Bags blow into our **waterways and the ocean**, clog the stomachs of wildlife, and break down into smaller pieces that also get eaten. They break up but do not biodegrade, lasting for years.

### ***Plastic bags cause operational and contamination problem at recycling facilities and commercial composters***

Plastic bags are a major **contamination problem in our recyclables bales** and in our commercial compost. **Bags clog recycling equipment** by wrapping around large rollers in the system. Workers have to go in and do the dangerous work of cutting the bags off the equipment for at least 20 minutes per 8 hour shift.

## State legislation builds on local ordinances and private sector initiatives

- **27 local jurisdictions (representing over 25% of our total state population) have passed ordinances** regulating the use of single-use plastic carry-home bags.
- **Kroger** – the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest grocery retailer in the US after Walmart – **announced that they are phasing out plastic carry-home bags** by 2025. Locally, Kroger's QFC is phasing them out by December 2019.



### **Includes these key features:**

- Prohibits the use of thin single-use plastic carryout bags
- Requires a pass-through charge of 10 cents on paper carryout bags and durable plastic film carryout bags (to encourage shoppers to bring their own reusable carryout bags).
- Requires the use of recycled content bags and requires that compostable bags be green or brown tinted (to reduce confusion by consumers).
- *Exemptions* include bags used for produce, newspapers, dry cleaning, small hardware items, prescription drugs, unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods, and frozen foods, meat, fish, flowers, and potted plants (and other items where dampness or sanitation might be a problem). Recipients of food assistance programs are exempt from the fee.

***This legislation is one of the four environmental communities priorities for 2019***

Contact: Bruce Wishart, Zero Waste Washington, (360) 223-2033, wishart.bruce@comcast.net