

**CITIZENS
CAMPAIGN**
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



www.citizenscampaign.org

- 225A Main Street • Farmingdale, NY 11735
516-390-7150
- 188 East Post Road, Suite #404 • White Plains, NY 10601
914-358-9840
- 744 Broadway • Albany, NY 12207
518-772-1862
- 733 Delaware Road, Box 140 • Buffalo, NY 14223
716-831-3206
- 466 Westcott Street, 2nd Floor • Syracuse, NY 13210
315-472-1339
- 2404 Whitney Avenue, 2nd Floor • Hamden, CT 06518
203-821-7050

Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT
REDUCING DISPOSABLE BAGS IN CONNECTICUT (SB 58)**

An Act establishing a fee for the use of plastic and paper bags at grocery and retail establishments.

JUSTIFICATION

Plastic bags are ubiquitous litter and often end up polluting our waterways, endangering marine life, and clogging gutters and sewers. Each year, according to the Office of Legislative Research, Connecticut uses approximately 400 million plastic bags. Only 0.6 percent of plastic bags are recycled nationwide, creating the need for plastic bag reduction and recycling initiatives. Unfortunately many voluntary efforts to simply reduce the amount of plastic bags consumed by shoppers have not yielded the results necessary to properly protect the environment, wildlife, and to reduce our use of petroleum-based products. One proven alternative to disposable bags for shopping is reusable grocery bags that many stores now offer in many shapes, colors, and styles. Reusable bags have many benefits other than conservation of our natural resources: hold twice as many items as conventional plastic bags, create hands free transport, do not burst under the weight of heavy items, are inexpensive and stylish, and can be washed and used for years instead of one day. Switching to paper bags merely switches the old problems with some new ones. **The solution is to provide incentives for reusable bags through a disposable bag fee system.**

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

- 5 cent fee on all disposable paper and plastic bags starting January 1, 2012.
- Exemptions for bags used to store produce, flowers, baked goods, meat, dry cleaning, pharmaceutical items, and newspapers.
- Establishes a recycling initiatives account in the General Fund

Recommended Changes

CCE recommends directing the funds to existing recycling programs

**Citizens Campaign for the Environment Supports the Passage of
SB 58 – Reducing Disposable Bags in Connecticut**

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