

**“Support for Proposal to Ban Single Use Plastic Bags in the State Of Connecticut”**

Written Testimony

Submitted to Connecticut House Environmental Committee

(Via Environment Committee Clerk, [jared.savas@cga.ct.gov](mailto:jared.savas@cga.ct.gov) and via Public Comment  
Email Address, [envtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:envtestimony@cga.ct.gov))

Submitted by David Downie  
Associate Professor of Politics and Environmental Studies  
Fairfield University

[ddownie@fairfield.edu](mailto:dtdownie@fairfield.edu)  
203-254-4000, ext 3504  
<http://www.fairfield.edu/lassochannel/academic/profile/index.lasso?id=58>

Work Address: 1073 North Benson Road, Fairfield, CT 06824  
Home Address: 655 Warner Hill Road, Southport, CT 06890

28 January 2015

Dear Environment Committee:

I write in support of the proposal to reduce and potentially ban all or many single-use plastic bags used in commercial shopping establishments, dry-cleaning, and other similar enterprises in the State of Connecticut (CT). Plastic bags represent an unnecessary environmental hazard. Eliminating, reducing, or overtly charging for their use will yield positive benefits for CT. It will also align CT with an increasing large number of places that have taken similar action.

I am sure your Committee will receive sufficient information on the negative impacts of plastic bags. These include, inter alia:

- the amount of oil and natural gas that goes into their production;
- the amount of unsightly litter that gets caught and remains in trees, bushes, beach grass, etc;
- the difficulty of removing this litter;
- the negative impacts on marine life, especially when bags rip into smaller pieces or small particles that are then ingested into the food web;
- production of toxic substances such as dioxins when the bags are incinerated;
- very low recycling rates;
- the difficulties associated with attempting to recycle some types of these bags;

- the negative impacts the bags have on some recycling machinery;
- and many other issues.

Eliminating single use plastic bags and increasing the use of reusable bags will also save consumers money. Eliminating plastic bags should also enhance and reduce costs associated with recycling paper, metal and other plastics, efforts which can save money for towns (taxpayers) and businesses.

Thus, rather than provide additional details on the above points. The remainder of this brief, written testimony will list some of the places that have banned or significantly restricted the use of plastic bags. This list buttresses arguments that such efforts are mainstream and successful.

### **Places that have banned or placed severe restrictions on single use or other types of plastic bags**

**Countries:** Rwanda became the first country to ban plastic bags. It became effective in 2008.

**US Statewide Bans:** California - legislation passed September, 2014. Takes effect in July 2015.

### **US City and County Bans (indicative list):**

- Alaska: Bethel and Hooper Bay
- Arizona: Bisbee
- California: Alameda County; Arcata; Belmont; Brisbane; Burlingame; Calabasas; Calistoga; Campbell City; Capitola; Carmel-by-the-Sea; Carpinteria; Colma; Chico; Culver City; Cupertino; Daly City; Dana Point; Davis; Desert Hot Springs; East Palo Alto; El Cerrito; Encinitas; Fairfax; Foster City; Glendale; Gonzales; Greenfield; Half Moon Bay; Huntington Beach; Hercules; Indio; Laguna Beach; Long Beach; Los Altos; Los Gatos; Los Angeles; Los Angeles County; Malibu; Manhattan Beach; Marin County; Marina; Martinez; Mendocino County; Menlo Park; Mill Valley; Millbrae; Monrovia; Monterey; Monterey County; Mountain View; Napa; Novato; Ojai; Pacific Grove; Pacifica; Palm Desert; Palo Alto; Pasadena; Portola Valley; Pittsburg; Redwood City; Richmond; Salinas; San Anselmo; Sand Bruno; San Carlos; San Francisco (became the first city in the nation to adopt a ban on plastic shopping bags in April 2007); San Jose; San Mateo City; San Mateo County; San Pablo; San Rafael; Santa Barbara; Santa Cruz City/County; Santa Monica; Santa Rosa; Sausalito; Seaside; Solana Beach; South Lake Tahoe; South San Francisco; South Pasadena; St Helena; Sunnyvale; Truckee; Ukiah; Walnut Creek; Watsonville; West Hollywood
- Colorado: Aspen; Basalt; Carbondale; Telluride
- Connecticut: Westport
- Hawaii: Hawaii County; Honolulu County; Kauai County; Maui County
- Illinois: Chicago; Evanston
- Iowa: Marshall County

- Maryland: Chestertown
- Massachusetts: Brookline; Great Barrington; Manchester; Marblehead; Nantucket
- New Mexico: Santa Fe; Silver City
- New York: East Hampton; Mamaroneck; Rye; Southampton
- North Carolina: Hyde, Currituck and Dare Counties
- Oregon: Corvallis; Eugene; Portland (July 2011)
- Texas: Austin; Freer; Fort Stockton; Kermit; Laguna Vista; Laredo; South Padre Island; Sunset Valley
- Rhode Island: Barrington
- Washington: Bainbridge Island; Bellingham; Edmonds; Issaquah; Mukilteo; Olympia; Port Townsend; Shoreline; Thurston County; Tumwater

**A partial list of some of the countries or regions in which individual cities have banned some type of single-use plastic bags.**

- Australia
- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Cameroon
- Chile
- Haiti
- India
- Ireland
- Ivory Coast
- Kenya; Mali
- Mauritania
- Northern Ireland
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Tanzania