



***Action today so future generations can continue to enjoy ocean activities.***

To: Rep Ted Kennedy Junior and Rep James Alibi  
From: Dave McLaughlin, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Access  
Date: January 29<sup>th</sup> 2015  
Subject: S.B. No. 349 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS AND THE USE OF REUSABLE BAGS.

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Clean Ocean Access (COA) supports the benefits of eliminating single use plastic bags. COA performed their final coastal cleanup of the year on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014 and unofficial totals show that the amount of plastic bags found on the shoreline increased as compared to 2013. COA collected 78,776 items of small to medium size marine debris from the Rhode Island shoreline in 2013 and 2014 and 5.5% of the items were plastic bags.

Year	Item Count	Pounds	People	Plastic Bags	Bags Per Person	Plastic Bag %
2013	34554	11734	1063	1591	1.5	4.6
2014	44322	11027	1300	2735	2.1	6.2

COA believes that the elimination of single-use plastic is seen as a good first step to tickle moral persuasion so that people start making better choices with all single-use plastics. Society has found many purposes of single-used plastic bags in the past 20 years and in the past 10 years society has equally found many alternatives as opposed to single-use plastic bags and reusable bags have many alternative purposes. People are proud to re-purpose their reusable bags!

Education and outreach have occurred for numerous years however the results show that the problem of plastic bags littering our coastline has not improved. We need to make the right choice for the environment, 2015 is the right year to make this choice for Mother Nature.

COA is an Aquidneck Island environmental group with a grassroots approach to its mission of taking action today so future generations can continue to enjoy ocean activities. Entering their ninth year of service, primary programs focus on eliminating marine debris from the shoreline (CLEAN), improving water quality (OCEAN) and working to protect, preserve and maintain shoreline access (ACCESS). All programs include a broader outreach of youth development, education, and social community events.

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