March 11, 2019
Testimony by Representative Mitch Bolinsky
Before the Environment Committee

In SUPPORT of SB-1003: AAC THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC & PAPER BAGS
In STRONG OPPOSITION to HB-5019: AAC ESTABLISHING A FIVE-CENT TAX ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC & PAPER BAGS

Honorable Co-Chairs, Rep. Demicco & Sen. Cohen; Vice Chairs, Kushner & Gresko; Ranking Members Harding & Miner; and the entire Environment Committee; I thank you for your consideration today of these matters.

I support SB-1003 and note it is similar to my own proposed 2019 bill, HB-5398: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISTRIBUTION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS, my 2018 and 2017 proposals and literally hundreds of others’ proposals to this committee. It’s important to make this move to reduce the volume of non-degradable plastics in our solid waste stream, in our environment and to eliminate their exposure to aquatic and wildlife. It’s good policy, true to stated objective, simple and does not impose additional, permanent burdens on consumers and businesses, as there will be immediate and easy access to reusable or 100% recyclable bags.

I strongly oppose HB 5019 AAC ESTABLISHING A FIVE-CENT TAX ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC & PAPER BAGS for the exact opposite reasons as it is counterproductive to the spirit of SB-1003. If we are serious about ending the use of non-degradable and non-recyclable plastic bags, SB-1003 accomplishes that. Implementing a tax on their continued use does not.

HB-5019 has the unintended consequence of creating a punitive measure for the continued use of something that has no place in our environment anyway. Furthermore, as a low-gROSSING nuisance tax, it will burden consumers, retailers and even our own government’s administrative capacity to administer, collect and perform enforcement of a program whose expenses are most certainly going to exceed its revenue contribution to the General Fund.

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

Representative Mitch Bolinsky