

Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance

Section 8.67.010 Short Title.

This Chapter may be cited as the “Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance” of the City of Cambridge.

Section 8.67.020 Declaration of findings and policy—Scope.

The City Council hereby finds that the reduction in the use of plastic bags by commercial entities in the City of Cambridge (the “City”) is a public purpose that protects the marine environment, advances solid waste reduction and protects waterways. This Ordinance seeks to reduce the number of plastic bags that are being used, discarded and littered, and to promote the use of reusable checkout bags by retail stores located in the City. Further, this Ordinance seeks to reduce the use of paper bags, due to their greater use of natural resources and higher cost impacts on retailers. This Ordinance also seeks to ensure that customers using reusable checkout bags are made aware of the need to keep those bags sanitized between uses in order to protect against the transmission of food-borne illnesses.

Section 8.67.030 Definitions.

(a) The following words shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

1. “Department” means the City’s Department of Public Works.
2. “Commissioner” means the City’s Commissioner of Public Works.
3. “Checkout Bag” means a carryout bag provided by a Retail Establishment to a customer at the point of sale. A Checkout Bag shall not include
 - a. bags, whether plastic or not, in which loose produce or products are placed by a consumer to deliver such items to the point of sale or check-out area of a Retail Establishment;
 - b. laundry or dry-cleaner bags; or
 - c. newspaper bags.
4. “Recyclable Paper Bag” means a paper bag that is 100 percent recyclable and contains at least 40% post-consumer recycled content, and displays the words “Recyclable” and “made from 40% post-consumer recycled content” in a visible manner on the outside of the bag.
5. “Reusable Bag” means a bag with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is either polyester, polypropylene, cotton or other durable material, or durable plastic that is at least 3.0 mils in thickness.
6. “Retail Establishment” means any commercial enterprise, defined as the following, whether for or not-for profit, including, but not limited to restaurants, pharmacies, convenience and grocery stores, liquor stores, seasonal and temporary businesses, farmers’ markets, jewelry stores, household goods stores, street fairs or festivals or bazaars.

Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance

Section 8.67.040 Requirements.

A. If a Retail Establishment provides Checkout Bags to customers, such bags shall be either a Recyclable Paper Bag or a Reusable Bag. Public information advising customers to sanitize Reusable Bags to prevent food-borne illness must be prominently displayed or communicated upon sale.

B. The Commissioner shall have the authority to promulgate regulations to accomplish any of the provisions of this Chapter.

C. Each Retail Establishment as defined in Section 8.67.030, above, shall comply with this Chapter.

Section 8.67.050 Effective Date.

This Chapter shall take effect one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of enactment.

Section 8.67.060 Exemption.

A. The Commissioner may exempt a Retail Establishment from the requirements of this Chapter for a period of up to six (6) months, upon a finding by the Commissioner that the requirements of this Chapter would cause undue hardship to a Retail Establishment. An "undue hardship" shall only be found in:

1. Circumstances or situations unique to the particular Retail Establishment such that there are no reasonable alternatives to bags that are not Recyclable Paper Bags or Reusable Bags, or

2. Circumstances or situations unique to the Retail Establishment such that compliance with the requirements of this Chapter would deprive a person of a legally protected right, or

3. Circumstances where a Retail Establishment requires additional time in order to draw down an existing inventory of single-use plastic check out bags. Any Retail Establishment receiving an exemption shall file with the Commissioner monthly reports on inventory reduction and remaining stocks.

B. Any Retail Establishment shall apply for an exemption to the Commissioner using forms provided by the Department, and shall allow the Commissioner or his or her designee, access to all information supporting its application.

C. The Commissioner may approve the exemption request, in whole or in part, with or without conditions.

D. The Commissioner, by regulation, may establish a fee for exemption requests.

Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance

Section 8.67.070 Enforcement.

A. Fine. Any Retail Establishment who shall violate any provision of this Chapter shall be liable for a fine of not more than \$300 and each day's violation shall constitute a separate offense.

B. Whoever violates any provision of this Chapter may be penalized by a noncriminal disposition as provided in G.L. c. 40, §21D. For purposes of this section, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, the Executive Director of the License Commission, the Executive Director of the Inspectional Services Department and the Commissioner of the Health Commission, or their designees shall be enforcing persons.

Section 8.67.080 Severability.

It is the intention of the City Council that each separate provision of this Chapter shall be deemed independent of all other provisions herein, and it is further the intention of the City Council that if any provision of this Chapter be declared to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this Chapter shall remain valid and enforceable.

Albano, Sandra

ATTACHMENT B

From: Chris Greeley [chris@northwindstrategies.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 9:00 AM
To: Maher, David
Subject: Plastic Bags

Councillor, Kevin Crane suggested I reach out in advance of next week hearing on Councilwoman Decker's plastic bag ordinance. I do work with the bag industry's association, the American Progressive Plastic Bag Alliance. Needless to say they have a point of view on these initiatives.

That being said, after working with them for a few years now I have a slightly different point of view, that being there ought to be a legitimate vetting of the facts and pluses and minuses of these bans before any action. Pass them or not make sure the discussion is not hijacked by the political optics, which strongly favor bans.

Bags are everywhere, millions and millions are used, they are polluting the oceans and killing sea life, the manufacturing process itself is an environmental problem.....

No one wants to see litter, in our towns, in the ocean or where ever, yes plenty are used, no one could be against wanting to deal with some of this. What is lost and many times it is lost because it is the "industry" articulating what are some interesting facts and points of view from folks like NOAA, the EPA, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

So my position is that I only urge jurisdictions to make sure they have looked at the issue "beyond the optics" if you will.

I have attached a link to the Associations shorter fact sheetthere is plenty more but at Kevin's suggestion I forward it and would welcome when and if appropriate a chance to follow up.

Thank you

<http://www.bagtheban.com/learn-the-facts>

Chris Greeley
Northwind Strategies
617-367-0300 x104
Chris@northwindstrategies.com

Say no to bans and taxes on your grocery bags.

HOME >

MoreShare |

Share

Learn the Facts

Plastic shopping bags -- the kind you get from your grocer or at the corner store -- might soon vanish from stores in your community. Misguided bans and taxes on plastic bags could weigh down the economy, increase costs for consumers and small business and leave a larger carbon footprint on the environment than alternatives. Plus, plastic bags are 100% recyclable and reused by 90% of consumers.

It's time for a common-sense plastic bag policy that's good for the economy, the environment and working families. Keep reading to find out why bag bans and taxes are a bad idea for America.

Environment

Plastic bags are the most environmentally friendly option at checkout. In fact, alternatives like reusable and paper bags increase global warming and use more resources.

Recycling

The rate of plastic bag recycling is increasing each year thanks to the 30,000 employees in the plastic bag manufacturing and recycling industry and thousands of recycling drop-off locations across the country.

Jobs and Economy

Proposals to ban and tax plastic bags threaten American jobs, force consumers to spend more and cause local business to lose customers and money.

Health

Bag bans and taxes force consumers to use reusable bags, which can contain unsafe levels of lead and bacteria affecting your family's health.

Reusing

Nearly 90% of consumers across the country reuse plastic bags. Learn some tips on how to reuse your plastic bags today.

Overview

Environment

Recycling

Jobs and Economy

Health

Reusing

Help us defeat plastic bag bans and taxes across the country.

SIGN OUR PETITION NOW

EMAIL ADDRESS

SIGN UP

Plastic bag bans and taxes have an impact on more than 30,000 American families who make their living directly from plastic bag manufacturing and recycling, as well as the thousands more who are indirectly employed. [More »](#)

Plastic bags are 100 percent recyclable. More than 900 million pounds of plastic bags, sacks and wraps were recycled in 2010. [More »](#)

Plastic bags are made in America; hundreds of millions of reusable bags are imported from China and other countries each year. [More »](#)

Bag the Ban is brought to you by the people of Hilex Poly,
a global leader in plastic bag recycling and manufacturing.

©2013, Hilex Poly
[Read our privacy policy.](#)

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT C

From: SavMor Liquors [savmorspirits@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 10:33 AM
To: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Plastic Bag Hearing December 19

Dear Ms. Lopez,

My name is Michael Weiner and I am the owner and manager of record for Sav-Mor Spirits, located at 233 Alewife Brook Parkway. Unfortunately, this is an extremely busy time of year and I will not be able to attend the Ordinance Committee meeting on Thursday, December 19, regarding plastic bag reduction. If possible, I would like to have my opinion registered into the record.

As a retail store, we pride ourselves on customer service. Our policy is to place all appropriately sized items into paper bags. We only use plastic bags for customers that request one. Those customers requesting plastic bags tend to fall into several categories.

Older members of our community, particularly those needing assistance to bring their purchases to their vehicle, rely on the strength and convenience of a plastic bag with handles to carry their items. This is particularly true in the winter months, where they may need to take a moment and set down their items. A paper bag would soak through.

Sav-Mor Spirits is adjacent to the Alewife MBTA station and Fresh Pond. Our customers using public transportation as well as cyclists and visitors to the pond, value a plastic bag as a way of easily transporting their goods. These customers may not live in Cambridge. Without the convenience, they may make their purchases in another city.

As a responsible retailer, and member of C.L.A.B (Cambridge Licensee Advisory Board) we collect corks for recycling, recycle all our cardboard, and accept bottles and cans for recycling. We also sell reusable Sav-Mor Spirits cloth bags, but very often people can forget to bring them when they shop. A plastic bag is more durable, lighter, and easier to carry than a paper bag, and most people do reuse them.

As a small operation, we rely on our local community for business and feel that discontinuing the use of plastic bags would negatively impact our establishment.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Michael Weiner
Owner

--
www.savmorspirits.com
[facebook.com/savmorspirits](https://www.facebook.com/savmorspirits)
[@savmorspirits](https://www.instagram.com/savmorspirits)

[617-628-7400](tel:617-628-7400)

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT D

From: Brian Houghton [bhoughton@mafood.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2013 12:15 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: December 19, 2013 Ordinance Committee meeting testimony
Attachments: 20130128142810035.pdf; 20131218120520410.pdf

Dear Cambridge City Councilor,

In response to the City Clerk's December 3, 2013 hearing announcement for the next Ordinance Committee hearing scheduled for December 19, I respectfully submit the attached testimony on behalf of our food store members who operate in the City of Cambridge and participate in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Association on behalf of its voluntary participants to decrease distribution of both paper AND plastic bags while increasing their recycling and the sale of reusable bags, a copy of which is also attached. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brian Houghton

Vice President

MA Food Association

31 Milk Street, Suite 518

Boston, MA 02109



MASSACHUSETTS FOOD ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

Chair
JAY RAINVILLE
Demoulas Super Markets

Vice Chair
JOE KELLEY
Stop & Shop

Treasurer
KEVIN BARRETT
Deloitte

Past Chair
JIM CROSBY
Crosby's Markets

DIRECTORS
SUREN AVEDISIAN
Omni Foods Supermarkets

KEVIN BEGIN
Garelick Farms

MICHAEL BOURGOINE
Associated Grocers of N.E.

DAN BROCK
Bozzuto's

RAYMOND BUDND
PepsiCo Warehouse Sales

RICK CARON
Trucchi's Supermarkets

BILL CDNGDON
Wegmans Food Markets

RALPH CROWLEY, JR.
Polar Beverages

CARL CULOTTA
Gold Medal Bakery

** CATHERINE D'AMATO
Greater Boston Food Bank

* CHARLES D'AMOUR
Big Y Foods

LAURA DERBA
Whole Foods Market

JACK DONELAN
Donelan's Supermarkets

SUSAN FAGAN
Coca-Cola Refreshments

ERIC FARIAS
Pepsi Beverages Company

RONN GARRY, JR.
Tropical Foods International

MICHAEL GOLD
Big Y Foods

PAUL GOSSETT
Shaw's Supermarkets

CHERYL HINKSDN
Hannaford

KEVIN KAVANAGH
Utz Quality Foods

PHIL LEBLANC
Longfellow Benefits

AL LETIZIO, JR.
A.J. Letizio Sales & Marketing

* STEVE LINCOLN
Garelick Farms

JOE LUPDNE
Windsor Marketing Group

JONATHAN MACZKO
Advantage Sales & Marketing

TGM. MARANDDLA
ESM/Ferolie

PETER MARCHANT
CROSSMARK

NICK MATOOK
Acosta Sales & Marketing

JOHN MCGINN
Snyder's-Lance

JESSICA MORIN
Price Chopper Supermarkets

HARRY "CHIP" O'HARE
JOH

LARRY O'LEARY
Nestle Purina

PAT OPPEDISANO
Boston Retail Grocers

RICK ROCHE
Roche Bros. Supermarkets

JIM SAIA
C&S Wholesale Grocers

ED SEEKER
Trader Joe's

JONATHAN SLAWSBY
Madison Food Corp.

MICHAEL SLEEPER
Imperial Distributors

BRAD STEWART
Kraft Foods

SAM SWEET
King Arthur Flour

* MARILYN TILLINGHAST
C&S Wholesale Grocers

MARK TRAVERSE
Mondelz International

BILL WEAVER
HP Hood LLC

PAMELA WOODS
Ocean Spray Cranberries

*Ex-Officio
**Honorary

President
CHRISTOPHER FLYNN

31 MILK STREET, SUITE 518

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02109

(617) 542-3085

FAX: (617) 542-3505

Email: mafood@mafood.com

December 18, 2013

Councillor David P. Maher
Chair, Ordinance Committee
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Chair Maher:

My name is Brian Houghton and I am the Vice President of the Massachusetts Food Association. The Massachusetts Food Association is a trade organization that represents the Commonwealth's grocery and supermarket industry on all legislative and regulatory issues affecting the retail and non-retail segments of the industry.

On behalf of our retail food store members who operate in the city of Cambridge and participate in our disposable bag reduction efforts (see below), including all Shaws/Star Market locations and Trader Joe's, and the cooperation and support of Pemberton Markets, the Association respectfully opposes the proposed banning of the distribution of plastic bags by retailers and grocery stores in the city of Cambridge, as proposed on an amendment to Municipal Code 8.68 Policy Order Resolution O-28 for the following reasons:

- In 2009 the Massachusetts Food Association and the MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) launched a joint effort to decrease the number of disposable bags distributed statewide (both paper and plastic) while increasing their recycling efforts of plastic bags by taking them back from customers and increasing the use of reusable bags through promotions, offers for sale and reminders for customers not to forget them through increased signage and postings. To date over 380 supermarkets in the state have participated in this effort and have reduced paper and plastic bag distribution by 33% three years ahead of its goal (please see attached copy of MOU and DEP press releases). Proposals to ban plastic bags outright would interfere with these recycling efforts and be counterproductive to the efforts of this program;
- By eliminating a recyclable product like the plastic bag, the city may be taking a step backward in an effort to become greener. Through this program, our members already accept plastic bags for recycling in their establishments, even bags from their competitors. Collected bags (and all their shrink wrap) are turned into useful products, including: patio decking, trim molding used by some of our members, mops and even carpeting. Some participants use the bags collected to be reused in the



next generation of plastic bags they purchase, coming full cycle. Consumers should be allowed to continue participation in these growing bag-recycling efforts as mentioned in the MOU signed by the food industry and DEP;

- This proposal is both restraining and counterproductive to our business members who operate in the city, since it isolates our multi-store, multi-state operators in Cambridge who function on a chain wide scale by forcing upon them a disruption in their chain wide operations, and makes it more difficult and expensive to operate in the city. It also affects our single store operators in the city, and disrupts their operations, thus possibly raising costs;
- From the food retail business community's perspective, the proposal does not fully address the issue of litter caused by the careless disposal of plastic bags, or the issue of litter in general. The proposal would only spur demand for paper bags. Although both paper and plastic bags both have their pros and cons we feel that limiting a customer's option to just paper, or forcing them to purchase a reusable bag if they didn't have one is not the most efficient reduction of the entire carbon footprint of paper bag use and not fair to the customer or the business operating in the city;
- *The bags themselves are not the problem, but rather what consumers do with them after they are finished using them for carrying their grocery items home.* Plastic bags are useful for the transportation of frozen products, raw meat, poultry and fish and other items that may tend to leak or create moisture. Although plastic bags can be harmful to the environment, the reason they become a problem is because of the improper disposal of them.

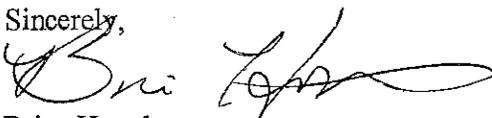
Supermarkets and retailers already do a tremendous amount of recycling and are an integral part of this community. They keep shrink wrap and corrugated cardboard out of their waste stream by having it compressed and bundled in compactors in their stores for recycling.

The Massachusetts Food Association has also worked closely with the MA Department of Environmental Protection to establish a voluntary supermarket organics recycling program, which offers food retailers some regulatory relief if they agree to establish and maintain an organics recycling program (visit: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm#nou>). The end result of this program keeps food waste from entering the waste stream and in turn is made into useful compost or donated to food banks and pantries. This effort with the Department to start a similar statewide program on the reduction and recycling of plastic bags should be given a chance to continue its success.

Retailers support initiatives that encourage consumers to make the right decisions regarding the proper disposal of waste and protection of our natural resources. The Association would welcome the opportunity to work with the city on this issue. A wide ranging and all inclusive solution is needed to address the problem of litter instead of bans which unfairly disrupt business and do not address the comprehensive issue of litter.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to working with the city on behalf of the members of the Massachusetts Food Association that operate in your community.

Sincerely,



Brian Houghton

Cc: Ordinance Committee & City Clerk



Memorandum of Understanding For Targeted Reduction in the Distribution of Grocery Bags in Massachusetts Supermarkets

March 12, 2009

Whereas paper and plastic disposable grocery bags are distributed extensively throughout our society and are typically disposed of after their initial use; and

Whereas paper and plastic disposable bags consume valuable natural resources in their production, increase waste generation, and contribute to litter; and

Whereas supermarkets and grocery stores recognize natural resource limitations and the need to design systems and encourage practices that minimize the use of and recover of these valuable materials; and

Whereas there are over 500 supermarkets in Massachusetts distributing an estimated 1.5 billion paper and plastic disposable grocery bags each year, and

Whereas the Massachusetts Food Association is a membership organization that represents the interests of the supermarket and grocery industry in Massachusetts; and

Whereas the MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources

Therefore the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the Massachusetts Food Association (MFA) through its members agree to work collaboratively to reduce the environmental impacts of paper and plastic disposable grocery bags by:

- 1) Setting a 33% reduction goal in the distribution of paper and plastic disposable grocery bags by 2013
- 2) Establishing incentives to encourage a reduction in the demand for bags and increased use of reusable bags by consumers
- 3) Establishing plastic grocery bag and other plastic packaging recycling programs at all participating supermarkets and grocery stores
- 4) Increasing the recycled content and/or the percentage of biodegradable grocery bags offered for distribution.

In implementing this MOU, the MassDEP commits to:

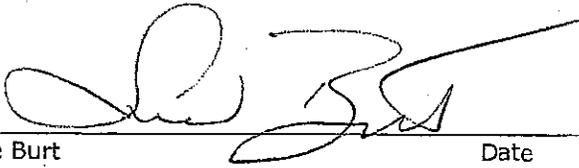
- 1) Provide technical assistance, training, education and support to supermarkets and grocery stores in setting up disposable grocery bag waste reduction programs.

- 2) Provide current best management practices for recycling of disposable grocery bags in Massachusetts and identify recycling organizations and hauling infrastructures to support plastic grocery bag recycling.
- 3) Provide recognition to MFA and participating supermarkets and grocery stores upon making progress and achieving milestones towards disposable grocery bag reduction including reduction in grocery bag distribution, increasing plastic grocery bag recycling, increasing recycled/biodegradable content in grocery bags, and increasing the use of reusable bags.
- 4) Monitor progress towards the goals established in the MOU in cooperation with MFA.

In implementing this MOU, the MFA commits to:

- 1) Encourage MFA member companies, new supermarket companies and independent operators to sign on to this MOU and commit to reducing the distribution of paper and plastic disposable grocery bags as measured by a reduction from the average annual paper and plastic disposable grocery bags distributed per store between 2006-2007.
- 2) Assist its members in implementing best management practices and employee training that encourages the reduction of disposable plastic grocery bag distribution.
- 3) Promote the adoption of appropriate store incentives to encourage the expanded use of reusable bags such as store credit for reusable bag use, sales of reusable bags, or other programs
- 4) Encourage the development and maintenance of in-store plastic grocery bag and other plastic packaging recycling programs at all participating locations
- 5) Increase awareness among supermarket companies, employees and consumers of the positive environmental, operational, and financial impacts of reducing the distribution of disposable grocery bags, increasing plastic grocery bag recycling, and increasing the recycled content or biodegradability of grocery bags.
- 6) Annually survey supermarkets and grocery stores and report annually to MassDEP data on the number of disposable grocery bags purchased per store, the amount of plastic grocery bags collected for recycling and other related information such as reusable bag sales, recycled content in bags, and biodegradability of bags.

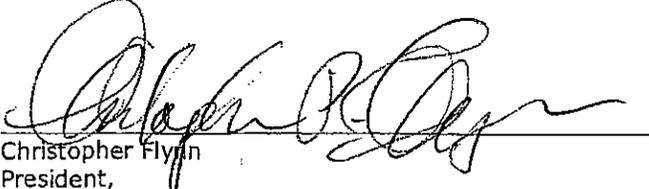
By signing this MOU, the MassDEP and the MFA express their intent to work voluntarily and cooperatively toward the above-mentioned goals.



 Laurie Burt
 Commissioner,
 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Date

3/12/09



 Christopher Flynn
 President,
 Massachusetts Food Association

Date

3/12/09



MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 28, 2010

CONTACT:

Ed Coletta (MassDEP) 617-292-5737

Christopher Flynn (MFA) 617-542-3085

MassDEP, Massachusetts Food Association Announce Positive Early Results for Disposable Shopping Bag Reduction Partnership with Supermarkets

Initiative Working to Encourage Long-term Recycling and Reusable Bag Use

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the Massachusetts Food Association (MFA) today announced that a joint initiative with the grocery and supermarket industry to reduce the number of disposable paper and plastic shopping bags distributed in Massachusetts has scored excellent results during the first two years – a reduction of 25 percent since 2007.

“This public-private partnership has shown great success in increasing the use of reusable bags in place of disposable plastic and paper,” Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles said. “I applaud grocery stores and supermarkets for working with MassDEP to reduce disposable bag use, and the public for responding to their efforts.”

As part of the voluntary initiative, 12 supermarket chains, comprised of 384 stores representing over two-thirds of the industry in Massachusetts, have been participating in the effort by tracking annual paper and plastic bag usage. Participating chains reported the reduction of 25 percent in disposable bag distribution in Massachusetts. The goal of the initiative is a reduction of at least 33 percent by 2013.

“A key MassDEP priority is to minimize the waste stream, and reducing the use of disposable bags by 25 percent is a great step forward,” MassDEP Commissioner Laurie Burt said. “Through this partnership with the supermarket industry, consumers are being offered sustainable alternatives that will further increase the reusable grocery bag trend.”

“On behalf our supermarket and grocery store members, MFA applauds the early results of the joint initiative that the industry and MassDEP officially launched in March of 2009,” MFA Present Christopher Flynn said. “By achieving a 25 percent reduction in the use of disposable paper and plastic bags by using an incentive-based, voluntary approach, we have shown that a balance between environmental stewardship and consumer choice can achieve significant results. We look forward to continuing our work with the state to build upon this success and further reduce the reliance on disposable bags in our stores.”

(more)



MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Each supermarket chain has implemented steps to encourage using less disposable bags, including training staff to reduce wasteful distribution of bags, offering reusable bags for sale, providing cash incentives for reusable bag use, accepting used plastic bags for recycling and posting instructional signs reminding patrons not to forget to bring their bags.

In addition to the industry working to reduce the distribution of disposable shopping bags, MassDEP has created a consumer brochure entitled *Sack the Bag* that encourages shoppers to use fewer disposable bags. Access the brochure here: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/sackbag.pdf>

Participating grocery chains include: Big Y Supermarkets, Crosby's, DeMoulas Market Basket, Donelan's, Foodmaster, Hannaford Bros., Price Chopper, PriceRite, Roche Bros., Shaw's Supermarkets, The Stop & Shop Supermarket Co., and Trucchi's.

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

###



MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 17, 2011

CONTACT:
Ed Coletta (MassDEP) 617-292-5737
Christopher Flynn (MFA) 617-542-3085

MassDEP, Massachusetts Food Association Announce Significant Reduction in Disposable Shopping Bag Use at Supermarkets

Initiative to Encourage Long-term Recycling and Reusable Bag Use Hits Goal 2 Years Early

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the Massachusetts Food Association (MFA) today announced that a joint initiative with the grocery and supermarket industry to reduce the number of disposable paper and plastic shopping bags distributed in Massachusetts has achieved excellent results during the first three years – a reduction of 33 percent since 2007.

“A 33 percent reduction in the use of disposable plastic and paper bags is impressive, and I applaud the public-private partnership that helped to make it possible,” Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr. said. “I want to thank the grocery stores and supermarkets for working with MassDEP to reduce disposable bag use, and the public for responding to their efforts.”

As part of the voluntary initiative, 12 supermarket chains, comprised of 384 stores representing more than two-thirds of the industry in Massachusetts, have been participating in the effort by tracking annual paper and plastic bag usage. Participating chains reported a 33 percent reduction in disposable bag distribution in Massachusetts since 2007. The goal of the initiative is a reduction of at least 33 percent by 2013.

“A key MassDEP priority is to minimize the waste stream, and reducing the use of disposable bags by 33 percent is a great step forward,” MassDEP Commissioner Kenneth L. Kimmell said. “Having met the initial goal two years early does not mean an end to the effort. Consumers are obviously adopting new behaviors and we hope to see continued reduction in the future.”

“On behalf our supermarket and grocery store members, MFA applauds the results of the joint initiative that the industry and MassDEP officially launched in March of 2009,” MFA President Christopher Flynn said. “By achieving a 33 percent reduction in the use of disposable paper and plastic bags by using an incentive-based, voluntary approach, we have shown that a balance between environmental stewardship and consumer choice can achieve significant results. We look forward to continuing our work with the state to build upon this success and further reduce the reliance on disposable bags in our stores.”



MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Each supermarket chain has implemented steps to encourage using less disposable bags, including training staff to reduce wasteful distribution of bags, offering reusable bags for sale, providing cash incentives for reusable bag use, accepting used plastic bags for recycling and posting instructional signs reminding patrons not to forget to bring their reusable bags.

In addition to the industry working to reduce the distribution of disposable shopping bags, MassDEP has created a consumer brochure entitled *Sack the Bag* that encourages shoppers to use fewer disposable bags. Access the brochure here: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/sackbag.pdf>

Participating grocery chains include: Big Y Supermarkets, Crosby's, DeMoulas Market Basket, Donelan's, Foodmaster, Hannaford Bros., Price Chopper, PriceRite, Roche Bros., Shaw's Supermarkets, The Stop & Shop Supermarket Co., and Trucchi's.

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

###