



NEWS RELEASE

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NYPIRG URGES GOVERNOR CUOMO TO INCLUDE PLASTIC BAG LAW IN 30 DAY BUDGET AMENDMENTS; URGES LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

NYPIRG RELEASES POLICY PAPER ON PLASTIC BAGS

(Albany, NY) The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) today delivered a policy paper to Governor Cuomo and state lawmakers urging that they ban the use of plastic bags in retail environments across New York State. NYPIRG's policy paper specifically urges that the governor advance a plan modeled on California's law as part of any 30-day budget amendments, due to be issued later this month. NYPIRG's call follows the failure of the governor's plastic bag task force to make a policy recommendation for New York regarding plastic bags.

Last year, Governor Cuomo approved legislation that *retroactively overturned* New York City's local law, which addressed the proliferation of plastic bags as litter, ecological damage and as part of the City's solid waste disposal burden. The state's repeal law also prohibited the City from passing a new law until January, 2018 at the earliest. Oddly, other local laws around the state curtailing plastic bag distribution through a ban and/or fee were *not* covered by the state legislation. Suffolk County's plastic bag law, for example, went into effect last month.

In order to address concerns over the damage caused by plastic bags, Governor Cuomo created the New York State Plastic Bag Task Force. The Task Force was charged with developing a report and proposed legislation to address the detrimental impact of plastic bags on the state's environment.

At that time, the governor said in a statement, "The costly and negative impact of plastic bags on New York's natural resources is a statewide issue that demands a statewide solution." The Task Force has released its report, but without offering a specific plan to address the "negative impact of plastic bags." The Task Force only offer policy options for consideration. (The Task Force report can be found here: http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/dplasticbagreport2017.pdf.)

In a short paper released today, NYPIRG reviewed the enormous impact that plastic bag use is having on the environment, particularly on the world's oceans. NYPIRG recommended that New York follow the lead of another large, diverse, state – California – in advancing a plan to help address this problem.

The California law has two major components: (1) a statewide ban on thin plastic bags (under 2.25 mils)—the ones most often distributed by supermarkets (those with handles, not the ones used to wrap foodstuffs); and (2) a minimum 10-cent fee for paper & reusable bags (including thicker plastic bags).

NYPIRG's analysis can be found at: www.nypirg.org.