



NYPIRG NEWS RELEASE

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NYPIRG RELEASES “NEW YORKERS GUIDE TO FIGHT PLASTIC POLLUTION” AS NEW YORK BEGINS ENFORCEMENT OF ITS PLASTIC BAG BAN

(Albany, N.Y.) Today, New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation will begin enforcement of New York’s plastic bag ban. The law was passed in 2019 and went into effect in March 2020; however, enforcement was on hold due to a lawsuit. That litigation ended in the state’s favor and enforcement now begins.

To coincide with this enforcement date, the New York Public Research Group (NYPIRG), has released a guide for New Yorkers to advocate for plastic reduction policies. This guide is designed to arm New Yorkers with:

- Information about plastic pollution and policies to reduce it;
- How to reduce plastic consumption individually, regionally, and statewide;
- Resources to contact state agencies and elected officials; and,
- Tools for organizing, contacting elected officials, and engaging media.

The guide also includes information for New Yorkers to advocate for the adoption of paper bag fees in their communities. New York’s plastic bag ban does not include a statewide paper bag fee; however, it allows cities and counties to adopt a fee if they so choose. The guide can be found online at https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/202010/NYers_Guide_to_Plastics_Oct2020.pdf.

The following statement is attributable to Liz Moran, Environmental Policy Director for NYPIRG:

“New York made an important move to reduce plastic pollution by adopting a plastic bag ban; however, enforcement is crucial to ensure the law works as intended. Thankfully, that work begins today. According to the Department of Environmental Conservation, New Yorkers consume a whopping 23 billion plastic bags annually, and that is only one kind of plastic waste that New Yorkers must eliminate from polluting the environment. It has been estimated that 8 million metric tons of plastic waste enters the oceans every year. This is why NYPIRG is arming New Yorkers with information to advocate for further action to stop the tide of plastic pollution and to ensure New York’s plastic bag ban is as effective as it can be. Enforcement of the plastic bag ban is an important start that will make a big difference for New York’s communities and overall environment, but the work can’t stop there.”

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