



Help Combat Plastic Pollution in Connecticut *Tell Hartford Lawmakers to Ban Plastic Bags for Good!*

Connecticut, like many places across our nation and the globe, has a growing concern about pollution caused by single-use plastic bags. Plastic shopping bags are costly, environmentally harmful, and completely unnecessary. They are typically used for an average of only a few minutes, but they have impacts on our environment that last for generations.



The Problem with Disposable Bags

It is estimated that nearly a billion plastic bags are used in Connecticut every year. The free distribution of single-use checkout bags comes with significant economic and environmental costs to our state:

- *Littering our Communities:* Plastic bags litter in our parks, beaches, roads, and waterways; costing taxpayers millions each year to clean them up.
- *Polluting Waterways and Harming Wildlife:* Plastic bags never fully break down. Instead, they break up into tiny *microplastics*, which are frequently mistaken for food by aquatic wildlife. At least 267 marine and avian species are adversely impacted by pollution from plastic bags.
- *Wasting Natural Resources:* Manufacturing plastic bags in the U.S. requires about 2.2 billion pounds of fossil fuels and 3.9 billion gallons of fresh water, and it produces over 1 billion pounds of solid waste and emitting more than 2.7 million tons of CO₂ annually.
- *Damaging Municipal Infrastructure:* Plastic bags are easily swept into storm drains where they lead to severe blockages, causing infrastructure damage and localized flooding. Plastic bags also frequently end up in the curbside recycling bin, where they become entangled in recycling equipment, creating costly delays for municipal recyclers and wasting taxpayer money.



Paper Bags Are Not the Solution

Unfortunately, paper bags also carry their own adverse impacts on our environment. Paper bags require cutting down approximately 14 million trees annually in the U.S., and they require large amounts of energy and fresh water to produce. Additionally, they take up more space in the municipal solid waste stream than plastic bags, and do nothing to change the throw-away culture that plastic bags perpetuate. Connecticut needs a policy that does not replace one disposable bag with another, *but instead encourages consumers to bring their own bags!*

Tell Hartford Lawmakers to Pass a Bag Ban for the 21st Century!

Proposed legislation in CT (SB 1003) would ban plastic checkout bags in Connecticut, without addressing paper bags. This is a good first step, but it can create an unintended consequence—encouraging consumers to switch to paper bag use, which also adversely impacts our environment. The goal is not to switch from plastic to paper; the goal is to switch from single-use bags to reusable bags!

Stamford, Norwalk and Weston, CT have all adopted local ordinances banning plastic bags and establishing a charge on paper bags (commonly known as a “ban/fee hybrid”). This approach has proven to be the most effective strategy at changing consumer behavior. *Los Angeles, CA achieved a 94% overall reduction in single-use bag use (including a 30% drop in paper bag use) after adopting a ban on plastic bags and a ten cent charge on paper and other bags at the checkout counter! This hybrid policy has since been adopted statewide in California.*

Reusin’ is the Solution to Plastic Pollution

Single-use plastic bags are a significant source of ocean pollution and contribute to the growing solid waste crisis in our state. The good news is that single-use plastic grocery bags are unnecessary in our lives, and there are *reusable* alternatives that are readily available to consumers. Reusable shopping bags are sturdy, cost-effective, and can be used hundreds of times. Using one reusable bag can displace the need for hundreds of single-use bags!

How you can help! Write to your representatives in Hartford, and tell them:

- Why eliminating single-use plastic bags and promoting reusable bag use in Connecticut is important to you.
- I support legislation (SB 1003) that bans single-use plastic checkout bags in CT.
- I urge you to amend the bill to encourage reusable bag use *by establishing a charge on paper bags.*
- Ask your lawmakers to respond in writing to inform you how they will address your concerns.

Please send a copy of any response you receive to CCE’s Hamden office—it helps us track progress on the issue. Thanks!

Remember to add your home address to the letter!

Write to:

Senate	House of Reps	Governor
6.) Sen. Terry Gerratana 8.) Sen. Kevin Witkos 10.) Sen. Gary Winfield 11.) Sen. Martin Looney 12.) Sen. Christine Cohen 13.) Sen. Mary Abrams 14.) Sen. James Maroney 16.) Sen. Rob Sampson 17.) Sen. George Logan 22.) Sen. Marilyn Moore 24.) Sen. Julie Kushner 25.) Sen. Bob Duff 26.) Sen. William Haskell 30.) Sen. Craig Miner 34.) Sen. Len Fasano 36.) Sen. Alex Bergstein	2.) Rep. Raghiv Allie-Brennan 63.) Rep. Jay Case 65.) Rep. Michelle Cooke 67.) Rep. William Buckbee 86.) Rep. Vin Candelora 90.) Rep. Craig Fishbein 107.) Rep. Stephen Harding 108.) Rep. Richard Smith 110.) Rep. Bob Godfrey 111.) Rep. John Frey 114.) Rep. Themis Klarides 117.) Rep. Charles Ferraro 119.) Rep. Kathy Kennedy 125.) Rep. Tom O’Dea 138.) Rep. Kenneth Gucker 145.) Rep. Lucy Dathan	Governor Ned Lamont c/o Constituent Services
300 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106	300 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106	210 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106

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