

Plastic Bag Ban

Warrant Article 17
Town Meeting
2017

Jim Ballin, Greg Dennis, Jim DiTullio, Laura Kiesel

What would the proposed bylaw do?

- Ban single use plastic bags at checkout in stores and restaurants
- Exempt paper bags and other plastic bags



Exempt bags

Newspaper bags



Prepackaged food



Produce bags



Wrapped meats



Dry cleaning bags



Paper bags



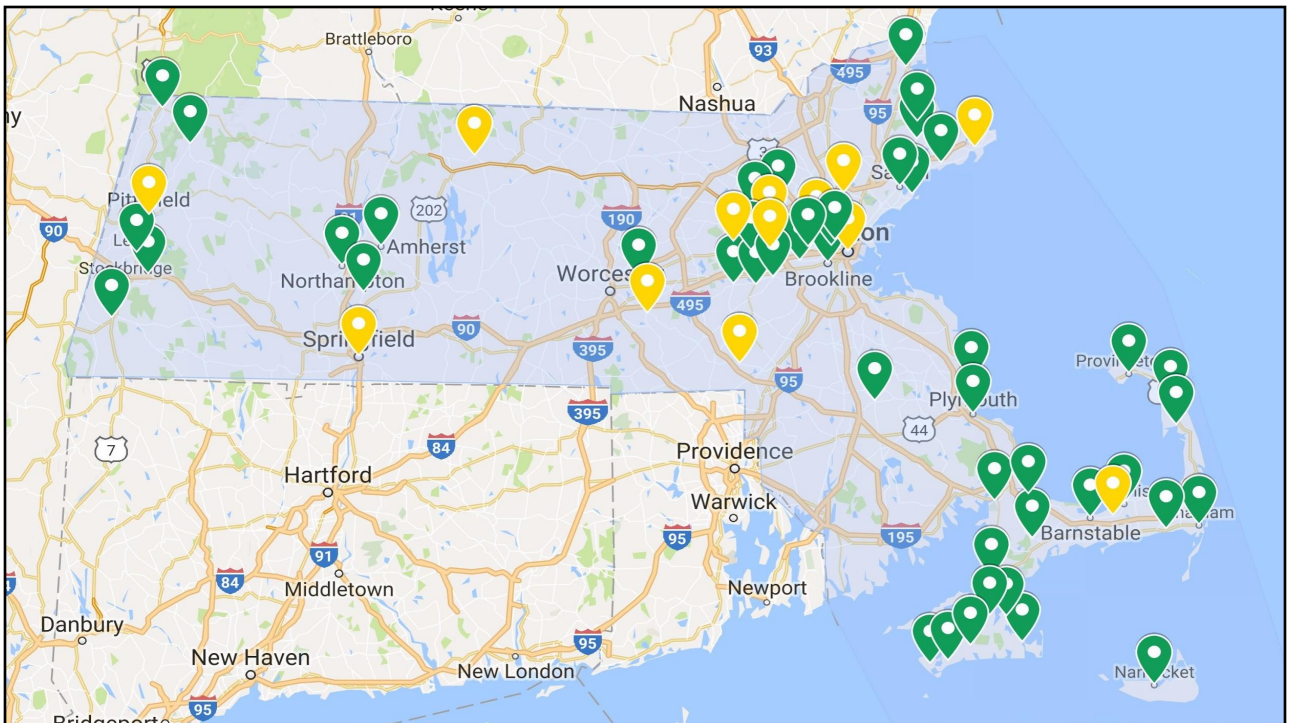
How will the ban be implemented? Any fees?

- Large retailers will have until March 1, 2018 to comply
- Small retailers will have until July 1, 2018 (over a year)
- Enforcement by Board of Health:
 - Warning only for first violation
 - Subject to penalty for subsequent violations
- Bag bans require little enforcement
- No fees for paper bags (AG's Office does not allow bag fees by Towns)



How many plastic bags do we use?

- Over 100 billion plastic bags in the U.S. /year; 2 billion/year in MA
- Arlington residents use more than 1 million plastic bags/month
- Nearly 1 bag per person per day
- Grocery stores typically provide 20,000 plastic bags per week



What harm do plastic bags cause?

- Kill or harm animals, particularly marine life
- Pollute waterways and oceans
- Require petroleum (a non-renewable resource) for production
- Contribute to increased greenhouse gasses and climate change



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What harm do plastic bags cause (cont)?

- Do not biodegrade in landfills or the environment
- Contribute to litter
- Release toxic air emissions when incinerated
- Have very low recycling rates
- Jam recycling machinery



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Plastic bags in Arlington

Swan Place



Town Hall



Arlington ctr

Minuteman
Bikeway



Mass.
Ave.



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How will this affect Arlington consumers?

- Paper bags and reusable bags available at checkout
- Reasonable exceptions for plastic (produce, newspapers, etc)
- Plenty of bags available for pet waste
- No increased consumer costs



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Plastic bags are not “free”

- Plastic bags cost retailers 2-5 cents per bag
- Supermarkets spend \$1,500-\$6,000/month on plastic bags
- Plastic bag costs paid by consumers through higher prices



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Will this hurt Arlington businesses?

- Bans on plastic bags **reduce total disposable bag use**
- Studies show little to no economic hardship to businesses
- Long implementation period and waiver process



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Best practices from retailers

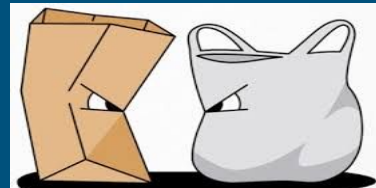
- Many retailers rely primarily on paper bags already
e.g. Shattuck, Whole Foods, Not Your Average Joe's, Trader Joe's
- Retailers can offer discounts for bringing your own bag
- Businesses can offer reusable bags with their logo



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Is paper really any better than plastic?

- Reusable bags are a better choice than single-use plastic or paper
- Paper has fewer post-production environmental consequences:
 - Biodegradable (decomposes without harming wildlife)
 - Made from renewable resource
 - Made from recycled materials
 - Not toxic when burned
 - Can be recycled at curbside
 - Does not clog storm drains or jam recycling machines



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Why not just promote increased recycling?

- Plastic bag and thin film recycling rates are very low (<10%)
- No curbside recycling means they will likely remain low
- Plastic bags that are recycled do not end up as new plastic bags



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Why would this be good for Arlington?

- Reduce litter cleanup effort & costs, and Arlington blight
- Reduce storm drain cleanup costs
- Reduce costs for curbside recycling
- Reduce Arlington's carbon footprint
- Reduce toxic emissions from incineration of Arlington's trash
- Arlington would be an environmental leader



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Who supports this?

- Arlington Board of Selectmen
- Arlington Board of Health
- Arlington Recycling Committee
- Arlington Conservation Commission
- Sustainable Arlington
- Housing Corporation of Arlington
- Arlington Centered/Davis Squared
- FoodLink
- League of Women Voters-Arlington
- Mystic River Watershed Association

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Who supports this (cont)?

- Mothers Out Front
- Friends of Spy Pond Park
- East Arlington Livable Streets Coalition
- Charles River Watershed Association
- Sierra Club MA
- The Humane Society of the US
- Mass Audubon
- MassPIRG
- MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Arlington United for Justice with Peace

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