

Plastic Pollution Letter to Your Elected Official

Dear _____,

Disposable single-use plastic bags, introduced just 25 years ago, are currently consumed at an alarming global rate of 500 billion per year. Plastic bags are the most ubiquitous consumer item designed to last for minutes but may persist in our marine environment for hundreds of years. As a concerned citizen and constituent of _____, I am writing to ask you to consider introducing legislature that taxes these bags, a solution proven effective around the world.

Single-use disposable bags present an insidious threat to our environment on multiple levels. They often wind up in waterways or on the landscape, becoming eyesores and degrading water and soil as they break down into tiny toxic bits. Their manufacture, transportation and disposal use large quantities of non-renewable resources and release equally large amounts of global-warming gases. Ecologically, hundreds of thousands of marine animals die every year when they eat plastic bags mistaken for food.

These problems can be mitigated by simply advocating – and legislating -- the consumption of fewer disposable bags and the use of reusable ones. One easy way to do this is by charging for their usage at the point of purchase. This was successfully first done in Ireland where the government introduced a plastic bag tax (PlasTax) that has slashed consumption over 90% and raised \$9.6 million for environmental and waste management projects. Retailers were happy, as well: they both saved the costs of bag purchases and improved their public image by doing the right thing.

Please consider legislation for a PlasTax here in our home state. It creates a foundation for both consumer responsibility and market-based solutions to environmental problems. And it's an easy, win-win solution to a problem that has gotten out of control.

Sincerely,
