



Protect Maine's Environment from Plastic Pollution

Address the plastic pollution problem by encouraging reusable bags.

Single-use plastic shopping bags litter our lands and pollute our waters, clog storm drains and recycling equipment, and are unnecessary.

Scientists say that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, ton for ton. Globally, about 1 million plastic shopping bags are distributed per minute and only 1% are recycled.

- Countless whales, sea turtles, and birds suffer slow, painful deaths and injuries from plastic bag pollution when they mistake the bags for food or get entangled. Plastic bags are the fourth most common type of plastic litter worldwide.
- Plastic bags cannot be recycled with other recyclables. When bags are mistakenly placed in recycling bins they can escape into the environment, jam recycling equipment, and contaminate the recycling stream, which is costly and wasteful.

Maine is ready and able to limit the use of plastic bags.

- Since 2014, 19 Maine towns, home to about 20% of the state's population, have passed ordinances to limit single-use plastic shopping bags.
- Plastic carryout bags have only been used since 1977 and today are readily available, reusable alternatives that cause far less damage to our environment. An incentive helps remind people to use reusable bags.

This bill would make Maine's single-use plastic carryout bag rules more consistent, and help our state do its part to address the plastic pollution problem. The bill will:

- Prohibit the distribution of plastic carry-out bags at the point of sale at all retail establishments in Maine.
- Place a minimum five-cent fee on paper bags available at the point of sale at large retailers that sell food, to provide an incentive for shoppers to use reusable bags.
- Require paper bags be made of recycled content and ensure that they are recyclable.
- Excuse participants in SNAP and WIC programs from paying the paper bag fee.



Support An Act to Encourage the Use of Reusable Carryout Bags

For more information, contact Sarah Lakeman, Natural Resources Council of Maine, 207-430-0170, slakeman@nrcm.org



Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition

is a partnership of 34 environmental, conservation and public health organizations representing over 100,000 members who want to protect the good health, good jobs and quality of life that our environment provides.

We are counting on Maine policymakers to take the important steps needed to make wise use of Maine's extraordinary environment so Maine people and Maine communities can thrive.

Acadia Center	Maine People's Alliance
Appalachian Mountain Club	Maine Public Health Association
Atlantic Salmon Federation	Maine Rivers
Bicycle Coalition of Maine	Maine Wilderness Guides Organization
Conservation Law Foundation	Midcoast Conservancy
Environmental Health Strategy Center	Natural Resources Council of Maine
Environment Maine	Physicians for Social Responsibility, Maine Chapter
Friends of Casco Bay	RESTORE: The North Woods
Islesboro Island Trust	Sierra Club, Maine Chapter
Maine Association of Conservation Commissions	Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative
Maine Audubon	The Ocean Conservancy
Maine Center for Economic Policy	The Trust for Public Land
Maine Conservation Alliance	The Wilderness Society
Maine Council of Churches	Toxics Action Center
Maine Council of Trout Unlimited	Upstream
Maine Interfaith Power & Light	350 Maine
Maine Lakes Society	
Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association	