

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Jon Tapper

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[www.afandpa.org](http://www.afandpa.org) jtapper@melwoodglobal.com

**Proposed Paper Bag Fee to Cost Consumers Millions**

***Task Force Overreaches in Plan to Ban Plastic Bags***

The plastic bag ban outlined today by Boston City Councilor Matt O’Malley contains a fee on paper bags that will cost several millions of dollars to Boston consumers, further strapping working families already struggling to get by in one of America’s most expensive cities.

O’Malley, a district councilor from Roslindale, chaired the Plastic Bag Ordinance Task Force and today unveiled legislation banning thin, single-use plastic bags from being used by grocery stores and other retailers. O’Malley maintained plastic bags are harmful to the environment and clog up landfills for hundreds of years. However, despite there being no evidence of environmental benefit, his bill also calls for a five-cent fee on paper bags.

“The Task Force appears to have a solution in search of a problem,” said Gretchen Spear, Director, Packaging, of the American Forest & Paper Association. “Dozens of communities in Massachusetts have enacted plastic bag bans in recent years, and all but one have opted against a fee on paper bags.

“A five-cent paper bag fee will cost Bostonians millions of dollars, hitting hard working families at a time they can ill afford it,” Spear continued. “Consumers who are sensitive to environmental concerns opt for paper bags because paper bags are recyclable, compostable, and made from a renewable resource.”

Paper is the most recycled material in the world, and in the United States in 2015, two-thirds of all paper consumed was recovered for recycling. More paper is recovered for recycling by municipal solid waste streams than glass, plastic, steel and aluminum combined.

Additionally, the surcharge will go directly into the retailers’ pockets and not be directed for programs to benefit the public.

“The City of Boston should look carefully at the proposed fee and reject it based on both economic and environmental factors,” Spear said. “Nearly every other municipality in Massachusetts that has considered a bag ordinance has turned down a paper bag fee. The Task Force’s proposal simply goes too far.”

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*The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) serves to advance a sustainable U.S. pulp, paper, packaging, and wood products manufacturing industry through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. AF&PA member companies make products essential for everyday life from renewable and recyclable resources and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry’s sustainability initiative -* [*Better Practices, Better Planet 2020*](http://www.afandpa.org/sustainability)*. The forest products industry accounts for approximately 4 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures over $200 billion in products annually, and employs approximately 900,000 men and women. The industry meets a payroll of approximately $50 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 45 states. Visit AF&PA online at* [*www.afandpa.org*](http://www.afandpa.org/) *or follow us on Twitter* [*@ForestandPaper*](https://twitter.com/forestandpaper)*.*