

Article 27 Restriction on Thin-Film Plastic Bags

Article 27 is sponsored by the Select Board in recognition of the proliferation of single use thin-film plastic bags and the wide ranging impacts these bags cause after their use. The thickness of the plastic bags has been reduced so much in recent years that double bagging is often needed to prevent tearing of the bag. The diminished load capacity of these bags has already been cause for many consumers to convert to reusable bags. While plastic bags were initially marketed to save natural resources, ESPECIALLY trees, they have since been proven to be consequential. Impacts from thin-film plastic bags include:

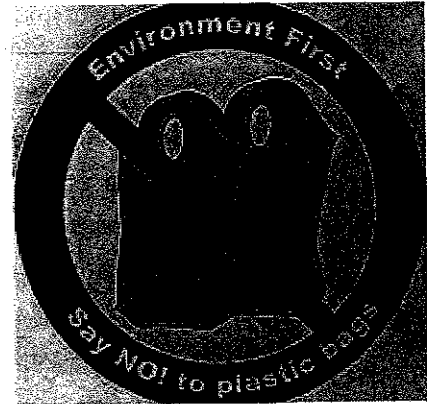
- Death and injury to wildlife, including birds and marine animals.
- Use of nonrenewable resources to manufacture the bags.
- Thin-film bags cannot be recycled curbside and contaminate our recyclables making them less desirable to processors for reuse.
- Thin-film bags are most often disposed (of) as (a) solid waste in landfills or incinerators.
- Thin-film bags become a significant source of litter and entangle in trees making removal difficult or impossible.
- Thin-film bags can block storm drains and pose a safety hazard to roadways during rain storms.

Article 27 proposes a ban on thin film plastic bags that are used and distributed by certain merchants and exempts OTHER merchants from the ban in certain situations. The proposal does not impact the sale of various bags, which are typically used in homes for varied uses including but not limited to sandwich and trash bags. Specifically the proposal: (will)

- Allows for the distribution of paper bags by all merchants, which can be recycled and ARE BIODEGRADABLE.
- Only applies to merchants with a gross floor area of 5,000 square feet AND ABOVE.
- Allows for all businesses to use thin-film plastic bags prior to point of sale for:
 - Bulk items
 - Meat or seafood
 - Bakery products
 - Flowers or potted plants
 - Newspapers, magazines or other periodicals that are not prewrapped
- Does not apply to items which are pre-packaged by the manufacturer or wholesaler.
- Provides a one year transition period before the ban becomes effective.
- Does not apply to plastic bags with a thickness of 1.0 mil or greater.
 - This threshold will allow for merchants to provide plastic bags for large or bulky items like clothing and linens.

Article 27

75 cities and towns in Massachusetts have ALREADY enacted by-laws or regulations on thin-film plastic bags. THE STATE ANTICIPATES ENACTMENT AS WELL, WHY NOT ENACT AT OUR PACE AND PROCEDURES.



Plastic bags cannot be recycled curbside. Plastic bags contaminate curbside recycling and reduce the marketability of recyclables for reuse.



A concern with plastic bags is not unique to Dartmouth or the many other cities and towns of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. About one third of the United States and the following countries have implemented restrictions to address thin-film plastic bags: Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Botswana, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Denmark, England, Ethiopia, Eritrea, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, South Africa

To learn more about plastic bag concerns please go to:
<http://75.147.58.17/CablecastPublicSite/show/3570?channel=1>

Why Thin Film Plastic Bags Should Be Banned

- 12 million barrels of oil used in US each year to make plastic bags
- These bags are used for an average of **12 minutes** total
- Over 44% of all seabirds have ingested plastic
- Sea turtles mistake them for jellyfish and eat them
- It takes over 500 years to degrade and they never really go away, they just break down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic
- U.S. uses **30 billion** plastic bags each year
- The average American family takes home almost 1,500 plastic shopping bags a year
- Plastics pollution has a direct and deadly effect on wildlife. **100,000** seabirds, sea turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed each year after ingesting plastic or getting entangled in it.
- They are a safety hazard on roadways, especially when wet, and later clog both storm drains and sewer systems
- Many people in Dartmouth already have reusable bags, but forget them, either in their house or in their car. Every community that transitions to bans like this has a short learning curve and people adjust.