Let's Talk Bags!
A community call-to-action to kick our single-use bag habit

League of Women Voters of the Edwardsville Area | Monthly Meeting
Thursday, January 10, 2019
Agenda

I. Background | who, why, what

II. The Opportunity | globally and locally

III. Taking Action | win-win-win solutions
Background

- **Bring Your Own Glen-Ed**
  - Organized in Spring 2017
  - Group of citizens - Edwardsville and Glen Carbon

- **Mission:** Reduce the harm single-use plastics have on our health, the environment, and the local economy

- **Activities:**
  - Engage and educate the community about alternatives to single-use items
  - Seek out best practices from across U.S. and world
  - Shine a light on local businesses taking action to reduce their single-use waste
Proposal | A 10-cent “green fee” on single-use bags distributed at all grocery/retail stores larger than 7,000 square feet, as well as all gas stations and convenience stores of any size, located in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon.

Why a fee on bags?
- It engages everyone with a choice. It broadens the reach beyond “the choir.”
- Fees work. Numerous cities report dramatic reduction in disposable bag use.

Use of fees
- Retailers keep 100 percent of the fees
- Retailers can opt to donate the fees to a local charity or use the fees generated to purchase reusable bags for their customers.
This ordinance would further position Edwardsville and Glen Carbon as exemplars of healthy, sustainable communities achieving triple bottom-line benefits for all:

- **Environmental** – cleaner local lands and waters, decreased emissions, reduced waste
- **Social** – improved human health and well-being
- **Economic** – decreased costs associated with dealing plastic bags in waste streams; reduced need among retailers to buy bags; cause-related marketing message that strengthens retailers’ relationship with customers and community
Edwardsville and Glen Carbon

Our environment is important to our local citizens, visitors, and economy. We live, work, learn, play, and shop green here!

Pop-Quiz #1:
Where is this?
What bird is this?
Why did I choose this photo?
Local perspectives

Republic Services
- Reports single-use plastic bags as one of the biggest contaminants, causing lost time and increased maintenance costs.
- Increased processing costs are one factor that affects contracts with municipalities.
- San Francisco calculates the cost at 17 cents per bag. New York City estimates that the 80% reduction they are seeking in plastic bag use would eliminate 10 million dollars in processing costs.

Living Lands & Waters
- In 2017 alone, LL&W collected 8,798 plastic bags from the Mississippi River watershed, which encompasses 1/3 of U.S.
UN Environment

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS
A Roadmap for Sustainability

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

PLANET OR PLASTIC?
18 billion pounds of plastic ends up in the ocean each year. And that’s just the tip of the iceberg.
EARTH DAY 2018: END PLASTIC POLLUTION

100 billion plastic bags are used by Americans every year. Tied together, they would reach around the Earth’s equator 773 times!

WORST OFFENDERS IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT 72.4% SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

- 18.4% Plastic of unknown origin
- 14.3% Food Wrappers and Containers
- 8.2% Caps and Lids
- 8.1% Plastic bags
- 7.5% Polystyrene foam

ONE PERSON USING REUSABLE BAGS OVER THEIR LIFETIME WOULD REMOVE MORE THAN 22,000 PLASTIC BAGS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT.
Figure 1.4. Global primary plastics waste generation, 1950 - 2015\textsuperscript{15}

Ongoing increase in plastic waste generation over the last 60 years.

Source: Adapted from Geyer, Jambeck, and Law, 2017
The Countries Banning Plastic Bags

National-level regulation to ban/limit the use of plastic bags and styrofoam (2018)

- **Total or partial ban**
- **Economic instruments (such as taxes)**
- **Combination**
- **Private public agreement (measures to cut use)**

Source: United Nations
Pop-Quiz #2: What do these states have in common? Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin
Case studies – U.S.

Oak Park, IL
- 10-cent single-use bag fee in 2017
- Retailer survey data: 1.4 million bags were bought prior to the ordinance; dropped to 22,000 (98% decrease)

Portland, ME
- 5-cent single-use bag fee in 2014
- Pre-ordinance: 10% of customers brought their own bags
- Post-ordinance: 80%

San Jose, CA
- 10-cent single-use bag fee in 2010
- Reusable bag use increased: 4% to 62%
- Litter surveys conducted after ordinance passed:
  - 89% decrease of bag litter in storm drains
  - 60% decrease in creeks
  - 59% decrease in city streets/neighborhoods
Ireland: The best case study

- In 2002, Ireland began charging 28 cents (U.S.) for plastic and paper bags.

- This green fee reduced non-reusable bag usage by 95%.

- Today, nearly everyone in Ireland supports their community and proudly carries a reusable bag.
Take Action

1. **Make it a habit** to use re-usables – everyone, everyday, everywhere

2. **Sign** the Ordinance Statement of Support.

3. **Talk it up** with family, friends, and neighbors.

4. **Contact key stakeholders.** Write, email, or call your city council representative and favorite businesses to convey your support of the proposed ordinance.

**Pop Quiz #3:** Approximately how many plastic bags have been used globally since I started this presentation?
Clean Seas PSA – “It’s Not Me, It’s You.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEc16dEMns
“We don’t have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.”

~ Howard Zinn
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