



## Preventing Disposable Bag Pollution in Stamford!

### ***The Problem with Disposable Bags:***

- ***Littering our Communities:*** Plastic bags never fully break down; they litter our parks, neighborhoods, beaches, roads, and waterways. ~ a billion plastic bags are used in Connecticut every year.
- ***Costing Consumers and Taxpayers:*** ***There is no such thing as a free disposable bag!*** U.S. retailers spend ~\$4bn on disposable bags per year—a cost that is often passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. Municipalities are also spending millions of dollars annually to clean up, dispose of and possibly recycle plastic bags.
- ***Wasting Natural Resources:*** Producing the more than 100 billion plastic bags that are thrown away in U.S. every year requires approximately 2.2 billion pounds of fossil fuels and 3.9 billion gallons of fresh water, while producing over 1 billion pounds of solid waste and emitting more than 2.7 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- ***The Problem with Paper:*** Unfortunately, **paper bags also have significant adverse impacts on the environment.** Producing paper bags consumes approximately 14 million trees annually in the U.S., and requires more energy and water to produce than plastic bags.
- ***Polluting Waterways and Harming Wildlife:*** Recent studies have found high levels of plastics polluting our oceans. Plastic bags never fully break down, instead, bags *photodegrade* into smaller and smaller pieces. Fish and wildlife often mistake tiny plastic pieces for food and consume them, or become ensnared in plastic debris. At least 267 marine and avian species are adversely impacted by pollution from plastic bags.



### **Implementing Local Bag Laws: The Solution to Bag Pollution!**

**Education alone has not resulted in a significant reduction in disposable bag use or a significant increase in reusable bag use.** Well over 200 local governments across the nation have enacted policies to reduce disposable bag use and incentivize the cost effective and environmentally friendly alternative: reusable bags. While the approach may vary slightly from place to place, some policies have proven extremely effective in curbing single-use bag consumption, while others have fallen short.

### **The Ban/Fee Hybrid approach: the Most Effective Policy Solution for Eliminating Plastic Bags**

Also known as a “second generation” bag ban; the ban/fee model is highly effective at changing consumer behavior. It includes a small charge for paper checkout bags next to a ban of disposable plastic checkout bags. **We support this hybrid approach for single-use checkout bags, as it eliminates plastic checkout bags and creates a financial incentive for consumers to use reusable bags instead of paper.**