



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

VICE-CHAIR
Majority Steering
Committee

COMMITTEES
Children & Families
Codes

Environmental Conservation
Higher Education
Tourism, Parks, Arts &
Sports Development
Transportation

PATRICIA A. FAHY
Assemblymember 109th District

Contact: Alexander Flood
W: (518) 455-4178
M: (518) 755-0010
flooda@nyassembly.gov

February 21, 2020

LAWMAKERS, BUSINESS COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS LAUNCH CAPITAL REGION OUTREACH CAMPAIGN FOR MARCH 1 PLASTIC BAG BAN

*Consumers Will Need to Use Reusable Bags at Most Conventional Retail and Shopping
Establishments, Resources Available to Assist Small Businesses*

Guilderland, N.Y. – Today, Assemblymember Patricia Fahy (D – Albany) was joined by local elected officials and lawmakers, local leaders of the business community, and environmental advocates to champion the state’s impending plastic bag ban, which will be implemented on March 1, and raise awareness among consumers and businesses to assist in complying with the new law.

Consumers will need to bring reusable bags to retail and shopping establishments – not just grocery stores. Information for consumers relating to the ban such as exceptions and exemptions, where to find reusable bags, and how to best prepare can be found [here](#). To help spread public awareness, a statewide [#BYOBagNY](#) campaign has launched and informational materials may be found there.

Food retailers such as Hannaford, Price Chopper, and Wegman’s, have already or are ready to implement the ban – however, small businesses have raised questions relating to implementation throughout the state. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has released information to help prepare small businesses, retailers, and manufacturers for implementation which may be found [here](#) and [here](#). Business owners or shopping establishments who have questions regarding implementation of the ban or otherwise are encouraged to contact DEC via email at plasticbags@dec.ny.gov or call (518) 402-8706.

“We’re just nine days away from the March 1 implementation date for the state’s plastic bag ban and we want to ensure that our local businesses and retail establishments, as well as a majority of consumers, are ready to comply,” **said Assemblymember Fahy**. “We’re removing the 23 billion plastic bags used every year in New York State that end up in our waterways, parks, neighborhoods, and environment. ‘Micro-lifestyle changes’ such as a transition to reusable bags, while enormously beneficial to the environment, may take some time for consumers to adapt.”

“The Retail Council has been working with its members large and small for the past year to help them get ready for March 1,” **said Ted Potrikus, President and CEO of the Retail Council of New York State**. “Now that the state has finalized its regulations, we have a clear idea of what we can offer to our customers. We appreciate Assemblymember Fahy’s leadership in reminding all of us in Albany County — stores and shoppers alike — that there’s a big and important change coming soon. We’ll be working with her and her colleagues in the state Legislature to make it happen on March 1.”

"We're looking forward to the implementation of the newly enacted bag ban and enacting a fee that will further encourage the use of reusable bags," **said Albany County Legislature Chair Andrew Joyce.** "The Albany County Legislature led the way on this issue and we're proud to join Assemblymember Fahy and local business owners to highlight the important changes and positive environmental impacts this new measure will bring forward."

"Transitioning to reusable bags and away from single use plastic bags will do serious good for our environment here in New York," **said Albany County Legislator Dustin Reidy.** "But outreach is key for any bold change like the plastic bag ban. I'm proud to work with my colleagues at the state and local level as well as local businesses and activists to make sure consumers are fully apprised of this change."

"This culture shift may smart a little at the beginning," **said Lynne Lekakis, Albany County Legislator.** "But as consumers change their behavior it will have a great benefit for the environment. There are several local retailers who have not provided plastic bags for many years with great result. Everything that we each can do to positively affect the environment is a huge help."

"Single-use plastic bags are an environmental menace," **said Caitlin Ferrante, Conservation Program Manager, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter.** "With NY's bag ban set to go into effect on March 1st, we will finally be tackling a huge form of unnecessary plastic pollution. Addressing the scourge of 23 billion plastic bags that are discarded in New York annually will have a lasting effect on the health of NY's parks, waterways, communities, and wildlife. The Sierra Club applauds the work that went into making this law a reality here in NYS and looks forward to continuing to work with the Governor, the Dept of Environmental Conservation, and the Legislature to ensure this law is a true success."

"The NYS Plastic Bag Ban will no doubt have an impact on our businesses in Guilderland, and throughout the Capital Region," **said Danielle Walsh, Executive Director of the Guilderland Chamber of Commerce.** "This is an important step toward sustainability for the community, but it is important for the Chamber to work with our businesses to ensure this transition is as easy as possible. It's important for the chamber to be a source of information for our members and to educate our community to get in the habit of bringing reusable bags with them when they shop."

"Every piece of plastic that was ever made is still with us today," **said Tina Lieberman of Zero Waste Capital District.** "It never goes away. It just breaks down into smaller and smaller microplastics that are permeating our water, air, food supply and our bodies. Single use plastics like plastic bags are the worst culprits, because they can be so easily replaced by customers and businesses. We can protect our environment and our health by just learning to bring a reusable bag or two wherever we go - and businesses can easily sell them at the register for a nominal charge. We *can* break the plastic habit, and this law is a good start!"

"The League of Women Voters promotes citizen participation in government by studying and promoting public issues," **said Mary Bielby, League of Women Voters – Albany County.** "The League recognizes the need stop treating the planet as an inexhaustible resource and applaud Albany County and now New York State for moving toward a circular economy that recognizes the need to stop producing and accepting plastic materials that are dangerous to our environment and our health."

"We're excited about reaping the environmental and health benefits of this transition to reusable bags, not just for our local health and environment, but also for all of the extraction, production and disposal communities that bear the brunt of our wasteful consumerism," **said Kathy Curtis, Executive Director of Clean and Healthy New York.** "We commend Assemblywoman Fahy and local legislators on their efforts to provide resources to retailers and consumers about how to effect a smooth transition to the new normal. New York's people and communities will be the better for it."