

Facts About the Proposed Hingham Bag Bylaw

As you may know from social media, the [Hingham Journal article](#), info sessions at the library, or publicly available meeting minutes, the Cleaner Greener Hingham Committee is working on a warrant article for Hingham to join the ~90 other Massachusetts cities and towns to institute a ban on single-use plastic bags. Here are the facts:

Why a ban?

Plastic bags are convenient, recyclable and part of everyday life. But only 7% of bags get recycled, with the rest becoming garbage that takes many years to break down. They wash up on shore, choke marine life, add to the massive garbage patches known as “gyres,” and break down into microplastics that humans may be consuming unknowingly.

Given that no economical or proven methods to remove plastic bag waste exists, the only solution is to stop plastic bag pollution at the source and to replace single-use bags with reusable bags produced sustainably and ethically.

What does the proposal entail?

The bylaw would target the thin plastic bags you get at places like the grocery store or pharmacy. It would NOT include produce bags, newspaper bags, dry cleaning bags, etc. If approved it would go into effect on Nov 1, 2019. Enforcement would be handled by the Board of Health, and penalties for stores that still offer single-use plastic bags would include a progression from a written warning to fines for each day the violation continues.

In parallel, the Committee would embark upon an educational program to inform residents about why reusable bags – and not paper – is the only responsible alternative.

What can you do?

You can support this effort by writing letters to your selectmen; taking photos of plastic bag pollution and posting on social media with #endplasticbagshingham; and most importantly – attending Town Meeting in April and casting your vote.