

Sample Testimony for SB5323, the Reusable Bag Act

Dear *(Senator Name)*:

I am highly concerned about plastic pollution in Washington State, including plastic bags that blow into waterways in my jurisdiction. I urge you to support the Reusable Bag Act to prohibit the sale of thin plastic film bags and encourage the use of reusable bags.

Only 6% of plastic bags ever get recycled – rather, they end up in the trash or as litter along our state roads, beaches, and other public spaces. Bags blow into our waterways where they can be eaten and clog the stomachs of wildlife, or break down into smaller pieces that also get eaten. Plastic bags rank amongst the top 10 items found at annual beach and stream cleanups in Washington and throughout the United States. Plastic has been found in the stomachs of nearly 700 species of marine life, including salmon and grey whales.

Though plastic bags break up, they do not biodegrade, lasting for years. They are not recyclable. By disposing of plastic bags in our municipal recycling bins, the bags actually cause operational and contamination problem at recycling facilities and commercial composters throughout Washington. Bags clog recycling equipment by wrapping around large rollers in the system, causing operational delays and hazards for workers that must remove them - in fact, Washington's Department of Ecology estimates that it costs \$700-\$1000 per ton for recycling centers to remove plastic films from other recyclables.

We must also support retailers who want to do the right thing for our waters and environment by enabling retailers to charge \$0.10 for paper carry-home bags and thick (4 mil) reusable plastic bags. We must also keep the pass-through charge.

It's critical for us to continue prohibiting the use of carry-home plastic bags: at least 27 jurisdictions have passed local ordinances banning plastic bags in Washington, and some stores are following suit.

Please support SB5323, the Reusable Bag Act.

Sincerely,

(Supporter Name)