



Plastic Bag Reduction Policies

Lessons from Maryland Municipalities



Local Jurisdictions with Plastic Bag Fees

- 2009 - [Washington, D.C.](#)
 - \$0.05 fee on all disposable bags (paper or plastic) at establishments that sell food or alcohol
 - Reusable bags available to low-income residents at no cost upon request
 - Retailers retain \$0.01 and remainder is deposited in Anacostia River Clean-up fund

- 2011 - [Montgomery County](#)
 - \$0.05 fee on all disposable bags (paper or plastic) at establishments that sell food or alcohol
 - Non-profits and county service agencies distribute bags to low-income households
 - Retailers retain \$0.01 and remainder is deposited in Water Quality Protection fund

Local Jurisdictions with Plastic Bag Fees

- 2020 - [Howard County](#)
 - Enabling state legislation: Local Government §13-1001
 - \$0.05 fee for every disposable bag provided at point of sale
 - \$0.01 retained by the retailer; \$0.04 remitted to the County
 - Funds go to Disposable Plastics Reduction Fund - funds provision of reusable bags to vulnerable individuals, consumer education, stream clean-ups, anti-littering campaigns

Local Jurisdictions with Plastic Bag Bans

- 2012 - [Chestertown](#)
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at point of sale; compostable bags also allowed for retailers already using them
 - Fines: \$100 for first violation; \$200 for any subsequent offense
- 2016 - [Takoma Park](#)
 - Ban on single-use, non-biodegradable plastic bags at point of sale
 - Fines: \$100 for first offense; \$200 for any subsequent offense
- 2019 - [Westminster](#)
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at point of sale
 - Fines: \$100 for first offense; \$200 for second offense; \$500 for any subsequent offense within a 12-month period
 - Original effective date: July 1, 2020; delayed to July 1, 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic

Local Jurisdictions with Plastic Bag Bans & Fees

- 2020 - [Baltimore City](#)
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at point of sale
 - Alternative bags (compostable, paper, reusable) have \$0.05 fee
 - \$0.01 remitted to the City; retailer retains \$0.04
 - Distributing limited number of reusable bags to residents with accessibility challenges
 - Baltimore City has general taxing powers like Baltimore County and Montgomery County
- 2022 - [Easton](#)
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at point of sale
 - Paper bags have \$0.10 fee
 - Full \$0.10 fee retained by retailer
 - Applies to all retail establishments
 - 7 months from passage to implementation

Local Jurisdictions with Plastic Bag Bans & Fees

- 2022 - [Salisbury](#)
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at point of sale
 - Alternative bags (compostable, paper, reusable) have \$0.10 fee
 - Full \$0.10 fee retained by retailer
 - Distributing limited number of reusable bags to residents with accessibility challenges
- 2023 - [College Park](#)
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at point of sale
 - Paper bags have \$0.10 fee
 - Full \$0.10 fee retained by retailer
 - Applies to all retail establishments
 - 7 months from passage to implementation

Local Jurisdictions with Plastic Bag Bans & Fees

- 2023 - [Baltimore County](#)
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at point of sale
 - Paper bags have \$0.05 fee
 - Small businesses exempted; bag thickness included in definition
 - 9 months from passage to implementation

Jurisdictions with Pending Legislation

- Greenbelt
- Hyattsville
- Frederick City
- Anne Arundel County

Prior City Legislation

- 2007 - Alderman Sam Shropshire
 - Ban on single-use plastic bags at all Annapolis retail locations
 - Would have been first bag ban in the nation for all retail
 - Outcome: FAILED
- 2020 - Alderman Rob Savidge
 - O-9-20 - Comprehensive Bag Reduction
 - Co-sponsors: Tierney, Arnett, Gay, Rodriguez
 - Ban on plastic bags and paper bags with less than 40% post-consumer recycled content
 - \$0.20 surcharge on all other bags at facilities greater than 20,000 square feet
 - Funds to the Watershed Restoration Fund to support clean-up and restoration of legacy plastic pollution
 - Outcome: WITHDRAWN

Prior City Legislation

- 2020 - Alderman Brooks Schandelmeier
 - O-52-20 - Plastic Bag Reduction
 - Ban on plastic bags and paper bags with less than 40% post-consumer recycled content
 - Did NOT include surcharge on bags provided
 - Outcome: WITHDRAWN

Previous Concerns with City Legislation

- COVID-19 Pandemic
 - Additional economic pressures on retailers and customers
 - Concerns about sanitation when less was known about COVID-19 transmission
- Legal Considerations
 - Per City Attorney:
 - “The City of Annapolis does not have the statutory authority to impose a tax, surcharge, or fee related to checkout bags... [such ordinances] should either be withdrawn until such authority is obtained from the Maryland General Assembly or modified to remove the surcharge or any similar fee.”

AEC Recommendations

- Urge City Council to introduce legislation to address plastic bag pollution
- Programs that include both a ban and a fee are more effective in changing behavior
- Retailer retaining fee can avoid pitfalls of taxing authority and reduce overhead for businesses
- No exemptions should be implemented based on size or type of business; exemptions for certain products should be as limited as possible
- Phase-in period can help consumers and retailers plan for the change
- Strong public education and outreach campaign, along with supplying bags to low-income neighbors, can help successful implementation

Active Organizations

- Local Organizations
 - Annapolis Green
- Statewide Organizations
 - Trash Free Maryland
 - Sierra Club
 - Environment Maryland
 - Maryland Episcopal Diocese
 - National Aquarium
 - Maryland Ornithological Society
 - Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
 - Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 - And others