
HOUSE BILL 3215

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2008 Regular Session

By Representatives Chase, Campbell, Hasegawa, Dunn, and Wood

Read first time 01/24/08. Referred to Committee on Select Committee on Environmental Health.

1 AN ACT Relating to plastic check-out bags; and creating new
2 sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the global
5 production of plastic bags has significant environmental impacts each
6 year, including the consumption of over twelve million barrels of oil
7 and the deaths of thousands of marine animals through ingestion and
8 entanglement. Each year, an estimated five hundred billion to one
9 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide and many of these bags end up
10 as litter each year. Most plastic bags do not biodegrade. Most
11 plastic bags photograde, breaking into small bits of plastic. These
12 small bits of plastic contaminate soil and waterways and enter in the
13 food web when animals accidentally ingest those materials. The
14 legislature recognizes the state's need for regulation and elimination
15 of the use of plastic check-out bags.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of ecology shall convene
17 and chair a work group to study approaches and techniques that are

1 effective at minimizing the potential for adverse environmental impacts
2 caused by the manufacture, use, recycling, and disposal of plastic
3 check-out bags.

4 (2) The director of the department of ecology shall establish the
5 work group and include representatives from: The department of health;
6 industry; and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by the
7 department of ecology.

8 (3) The work group shall make recommendations to the legislature on
9 practical and cost-effective opportunities to minimize the potential
10 for adverse environmental impacts caused by the manufacture, use,
11 recycling, and disposal of plastic check-out bags. The definition of
12 "plastic check-out bag" is any plastic bag that is provided by a retail
13 store or wholesale store to a customer at the point of sale.

14 (4) In carrying out its assignment, the work group shall include,
15 but not be limited to, the following considerations:

16 (a) Laws and regulations of other states regarding the manufacture,
17 use, recycling, and disposal of plastic check-out bags compared to
18 Washington state and federal laws and regulations regarding the
19 manufacture, use, recycling, and disposal of plastic check-out bags;

20 (b) Research findings regarding the scope of the environmental
21 impact caused by plastic check-out bags; and

22 (c) Alternative options for reducing the environmental impact
23 caused by the manufacture, use, recycling, and disposal of plastic
24 check-out bags in Washington, including the economic and environmental
25 impacts of implementation of each alternative options. At a minimum,
26 the following alternative options must be delineated, analyzed, and
27 reported on:

28 (i) Banning plastic check-out bags;

29 (ii) Mandatory recycling of plastic check-out bags; and

30 (iii) Taxes charged for plastic check-out bags.

31 (5) Recommendations may include statutory or regulatory changes,
32 incentives, and other approaches. Recommendations must be presented in
33 a report to the governor and to the legislature by December 1, 2008.

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