



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Statement by Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. on Passage of Senate Bill to Eliminate Five Cent Bag Fee

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. June 7, 2016

| ISSUE: **PLASTIC BAGS**

Howard Beach, NY (June 7, 2016) Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. made the following statement today on the State Senate passage of legislation (S.7336) he supported that would prevent New York City and other municipalities from imposing fees on the use of plastic grocery bags:

“There is no question that we need to take positive action to end the proliferation of plastic bags that clog up our storm drains, litter our trees, and otherwise degrade our environment and landscape. However, I don’t think the recently-approved New York City law imposing a punitive fee upon our residents who use plastic bags is the right solution. I have had many complaints from individuals, especially fixed-income seniors, in my district who object to the ‘bag tax.’

“Instead of simply punishing consumers, we should be looking at other credible ways to address the plastic bag issue. I don’t believe this disproportionate fee, which will reluctantly be paid by consumers, with the money collected going to the businesses and not for environmental purposes, will result in a significant decrease in the use of plastic bags.

Actually, some major chain stores, like Target and Whole Foods, offer discounts to reward consumers who bring their own shopping bags and distribute reusable bags.

"I do believe a direct legislative ban on plastic bags should be passed. The New York City Styrofoam ban was overturned by the courts, but that doesn't mean the ban wasn't the right thing to do. We should also actively look to make it easier to recycle plastic bags so that fewer end up in our waste stream, or better educate consumers on how to reuse various types of shopping bags. I would gladly accept and properly dispose of plastic bags at my numerous recycling events in the district.

"Quite simply, there must be other avenues we can explore to encourage New Yorkers to adopt more environmentally-conscious behavior without basically imposing a surcharge on them. I encourage ongoing conversations among the State Legislature, City Council, the Mayor, the environmental community, businesses and other stakeholders to resolve the plastic bag issue in a way that we can all support."