



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## HOYLMAN CASTIGATES SENATE'S "SHAMEFUL" OVERRIDE OF NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL PLASTIC BAG BILL

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL January 18, 2017



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ALBANY – State Senator Brad Hoylman (D, WF-Manhattan), member of the Environmental Conservation Committee, took to the Senate floor today to denounce legislation that would override the 5-cent plastic bag fee passed by the New York City Council last year aimed at reducing the 91,000 tons of plastic waste the City produces each year.

S362, which passed the Senate on Tuesday, would prohibit cities with a population of one million or more – a criterion met only by New York City – from imposing any “tax, fee or any other local charge” on any carryout bags, including plastic carryout bags, specifically preempting [Intro 209-A](#). In his remarks, Senator Hoylman excoriated the Senate majority for supporting what he described as misplaced priorities:

“This is the New York State Senate, not the New York State Council, and surely we have more important things to do than revisit a local law that has been duly passed by an elected legislature. With all of the concerns among our constituents -- concerns about transparency, ethics, and accountability -- I think it’s a shame that we kick start this session with a discussion on plastic bags.”

Senator Hoylman also noted the growing trend of Republican-controlled state legislatures across the country overturning laws passed by municipalities:

“Most of the people voting for this bill do not represent New York City. This is the nullification of the wishes of a legislative body representing 8.5 million people. Groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council, funded by the biggest corporate interests, are using state legislatures like pawns to preempt local laws just like this. It’s a disturbing trend we’ve seen used to overturn LGBT rights in Charlotte, paid sick leave in Milwaukee, and minimum wage in Birmingham. We should have none of it. The New York State Senate needs to stand up for local democracy.”

In New York City alone, upwards of 10 billion plastic bags are thrown away each year, with over 90% ending up in landfills and the rest collecting in streets, sewers, and waterways. Passed in June of 2016 after more than two years of negotiations and following the example of numerous municipalities such as Washington, DC, Boulder, Colorado, and Portland, Maine Intro 209-A would help reduce this waste by enacting a 5-cent fee on all plastic and paper carryout bags, to be retained by the retailer while exempting people receiving SNAP or WIC benefits.

Footage of Senator Hoylman's full remarks can be found [here](#).