



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo seeks further delay for bag ban implementation

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO August 17, 2020

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New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, today encouraged Gov. Andrew Cuomo to further delay the implementation of New York’s plastic bag ban until the state’s COVID-19 emergency disaster declaration has been lifted.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation had originally intended to enforce the ban, which went into effect March 1, in April. However, implementation was delayed until June 15 due to a challenge to the ban’s legality. The DEC has recently indicated that it will advise all the parties involved in the litigation at least 30 days in advance of the department’s intention to begin enforcing the ban.

“While I recognize the importance of continuing to look at ways to protect our environment, I am urging the Governor to delay implementation of this ban until the coronavirus pandemic emergency has ended and not when a court says that the state may do so,” Sen. Griffo said. “I am concerned that, at a time when we should be focused on hygiene and health, requiring the public to bring bags back and forth between stores and their homes could lead to potential contamination and health concerns. By delaying the implementation of the ban, we can continue to protect New Yorkers from unnecessary and additional risks during the coronavirus pandemic.”

Sen. Griffo urged retail outlets to offer alternative bagging options at no cost to the consumer. He also expressed frustration that some establishments were blaming the state for the extra charge for paper bags during the pandemic.

“I acknowledge that the current leadership in Albany has imposed this ban and understand that there is a cost associated with stores stocking up on paper bags,” Sen. Griffo said.

“However, stores should not misrepresent the reasons as why they are charging a fee for an alternative bag. The implementation of the state’s plastic bag ban has been delayed for the time being. Retail outlets are charging the extra fee on their own despite not being required to do so by the state.”

Sen. Griffo also praised the governments of Oneida, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties for not imposing a fee on bags.