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Single-Use Plastics & Expanded Polystyrene Products Ordinance Proposal Follow-Up Meeting #2

Abington Environmental Advisory Council
Public Information Meeting



Presenters:
Andrea Soo, Abington EAC Secretary
Karin McGarry-Rosen, Abington EAC Chair

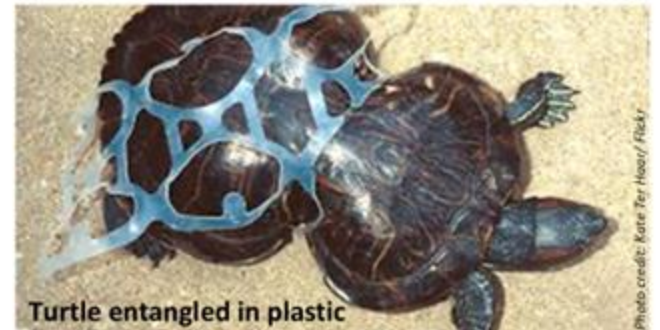
Why are we here today?

- To raise awareness about the impact of single-use plastic pollution.
- To discuss what we have done about it.
- To tell you where we are now.



What's the big deal?

- Plastic bags **clog stormwater infrastructure**.
- Plastic bags **tangle recycling machinery**.
- Plastics found in **every major waterway in Pennsylvania**, including [50 of the cleanest](#).
- Plastics are **harmful to humans and wildlife**. Chemical leachates and microplastics are consumed by virtually all life on earth.



What's the big deal?

- **Plastics are not easily recyclable.** An estimated 5% of plastic is actually recycled. The remainder go to landfills, get incinerated, or litter the environment.
- **Plastics are overflowing our landfills.** The U.S. disposes an estimated 86% of household plastics every year to landfills.
- **Incinerated plastics impact air quality and public health.** About 9% of household plastics are incinerated, releasing bisphenols, phthalates, etc. that disrupt neurodevelopment, endocrine, and reproductive functions.



Proposed Ordinance - Revised June 2024 - sent to BOC

Abington EAC proposes the following:

- Prohibit single-use plastic bags, [expanded polystyrene \(ESP\)](#), and plastic straws/stirrers with plastic straws provided on an “as needed / as requested” basis.
 - If the business wants to offer bags, the bags must be a paper bag that contains no old growth fiber; contains a minimum of 40% post-consumer recycled material; and is labeled in a highly visible manner with the name of the manufacturer and the percentage of post-consumer recycled content of the bag in an easy-to-read font size **OR** a reusable bag that is a carryout bag that is designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is: Bags made of cloth or other machine-washable fabric that has stitched handles; or a polypropylene bag that is woven or non-woven and fused fabric with a minimum 80 gram/square meter density that has stitched, and not heat-fused handles.
- \$0.15 fee for paper bags
- Exemptions will include bags used for:
 - Bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, or candy
 - Meat or fish; to contain or wrap frozen foods; or to contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods
 - Live animals (e.g. fish, insects)
 - Laundry or dry cleaning
 - Newspapers
 - Prescription drugs

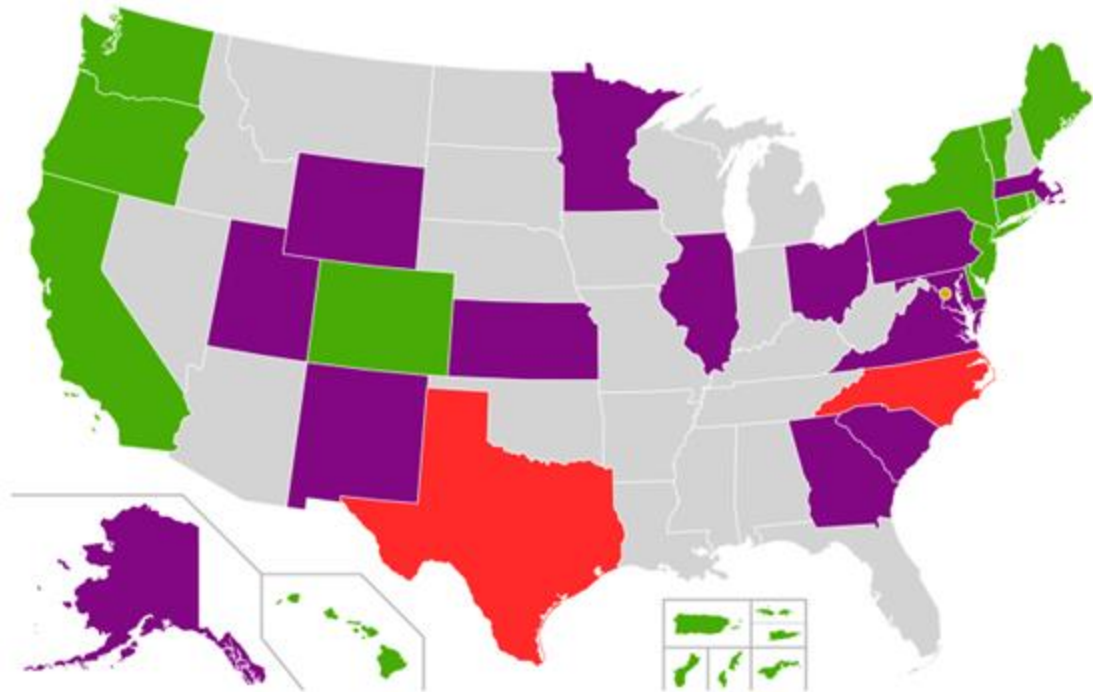
What have we done since February 2024

- Presented SUP Draft Ordinance to:
 - NAACP Willow Grove Local Chapter meeting in February 2024 – Letter of Support sent to the BOC
 - Glenside Business Association meeting in June 2024 – Memo provided with link to business survey
 - Memo provided with link to business survey to Willow Grove Mall businesses
- Revised memo and draft ordinance and sent to the BOC - June 2024
- Received business feedback via the survey and door to door visits
- 2nd letter of support from Curds and Whey (Ward 7)
- 3rd letter of support from Heirloom Pottery Studio (Ward 12)
- Received feedback from surrounding townships post-implementation
- Local business donated bags and we purchased reusable bags

States that have already taken action:

Twelve (12) states have enforced an outright ban on single-use plastics:

- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Hawaii
- Maine
- New Jersey
- New York
- Oregon
- Rhode Island
- Vermont
- Washington

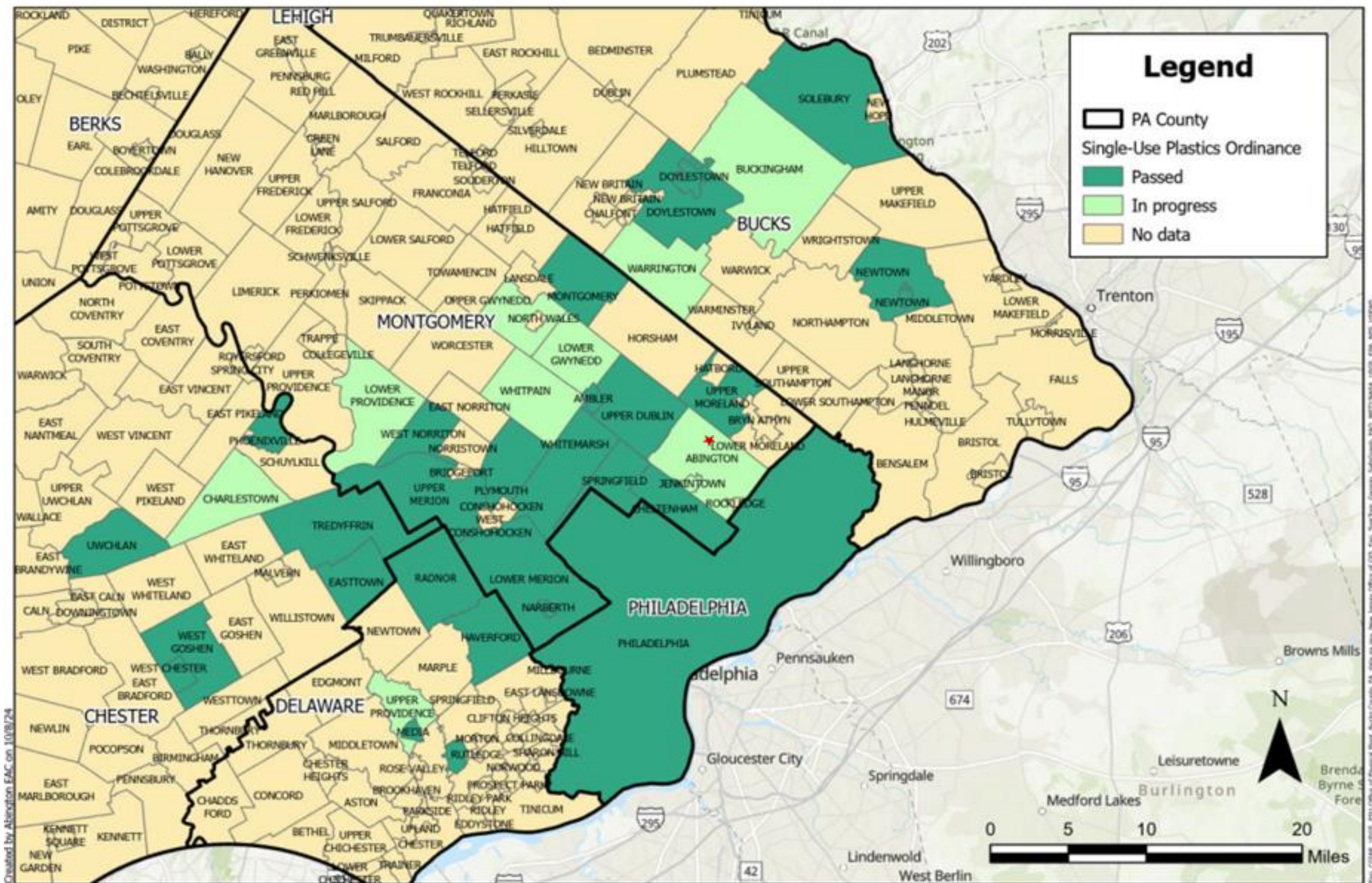


Plastic bags banned

A charge on some plastic bags

Partial charge or ban (county or municipality level)

Bans preempted by state law or court order



**Southeast PA Municipalities & Status of Single-Use Plastics Ordinances
(as of October 2024)**

Process & Implementation



- **Ordinance review & approval:** The Abington EAC recommends finalizing and approving an ordinance as soon as possible.
- **Phased-in approach:** Take time to spread awareness, educate businesses and consumers, allow time to ask questions, get clarification or assistance, and businesses to adapt to a new supply chain process.
- **Ordinance adoption:** Propose adoption of ordinance by the Board of Commissioners on January 1, 2025.
- **Enact ordinance:** Propose that ordinance is effective and enforced in June 2025.

Business Outreach/Survey Responses by Ward

Name of business	Ward No.
Piccola Pizza	3
China Wok	3
McKinley Tavern	3
White Elephant	3
Jack's Farm Market	4
J Smoke Shop	4
Express Mart	4
Munchy's	4
Sprinkles	4
Chicken & Burger - WG Mall	5
Lasaka - WG mall	5
Sweety Bella - WG mall	5
Philly Shared Retail - WG mall	5
Roskosh - WG mall	5
Loft	5
East meets west	5
Hot Topic	5
forever 21	5

Name of business	Ward No.
Joe's Meat Market	6
Union Jack's Olde Glory Pub	6
Flowers by Nicole	6
Lew's Seafood Takeout & Dockside Pub	6
Luigi's Pizza and Pasta	6
Curds and Whey *	7
Diane Glynn Jewelry	7
Above the Crowd Boutique	7
Simply Fruit	7
The Postal Factory	7
Mi-Lady Bra Boutique	7
Renato's Pizzeria Glenside	9
Little Italy Pizza	9
NORTH PENN POST 676, VFW	9
Closet Exchange	10
Sushi Ocean	10
Pho Ben City	10
Frosty Caps	10

Business Outreach/Survey Responses by Ward (con't)

Name of business	Ward No.
Crafty Crab	11
Vintage Restaurant	11
Abington Pharmacy	11
Na Go Mi Japanese Restaurant	12
Heirloom Pottery Studio *	12
Penny's Flowers	12
Betty Jacks Art Gallery Shop	12
Bulls Eye Burger	12
Keane Vintage antique gift shop	12
Glenside Pizza	12
BT Smoke Shop	12
Minuteman Press of Glenside	12
Custom Picture Framer LLC	12
Kay's Cigar Sensations	12
The Village Diner	12
Queenie's Kingdom Company	12
Grin and Wear It	12
The Highland	12
Daryl's Bakery	12
Village Deli	12
Giulianos Deli	12

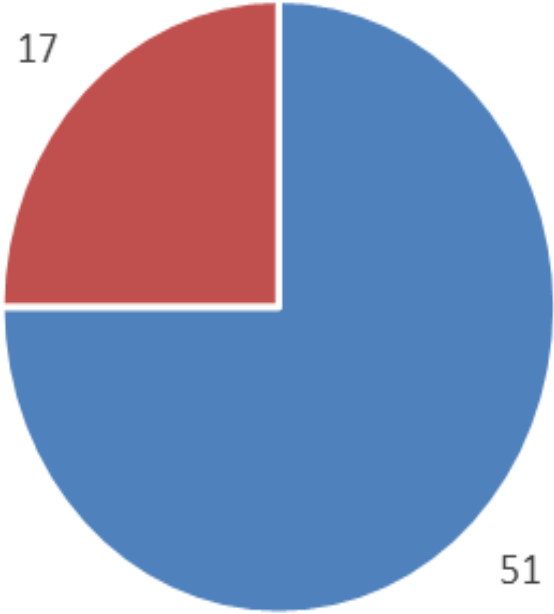
Name of business	Ward No.
7-Eleven	13
Bond Cleaners	13
Rita's Water Ice	13
Madonna's beer distributor	13
Carminati Creamery (gelato place)	13
Keswick Cycle	13
EZ-Stop/Easton Mart	13
Dolce Luna Restaurant	14
Eagle Smoke and Convenience Store	14
Silver Moon Pizza & Restaurant	14
Easton Wireless & Smoke Shop	14
* Letter of support sent to the BOC	

Total of 70 businesses completed the survey OR were visited with a focus on small businesses

Note: 2 businesses are no longer in operating – their responses were excluded.

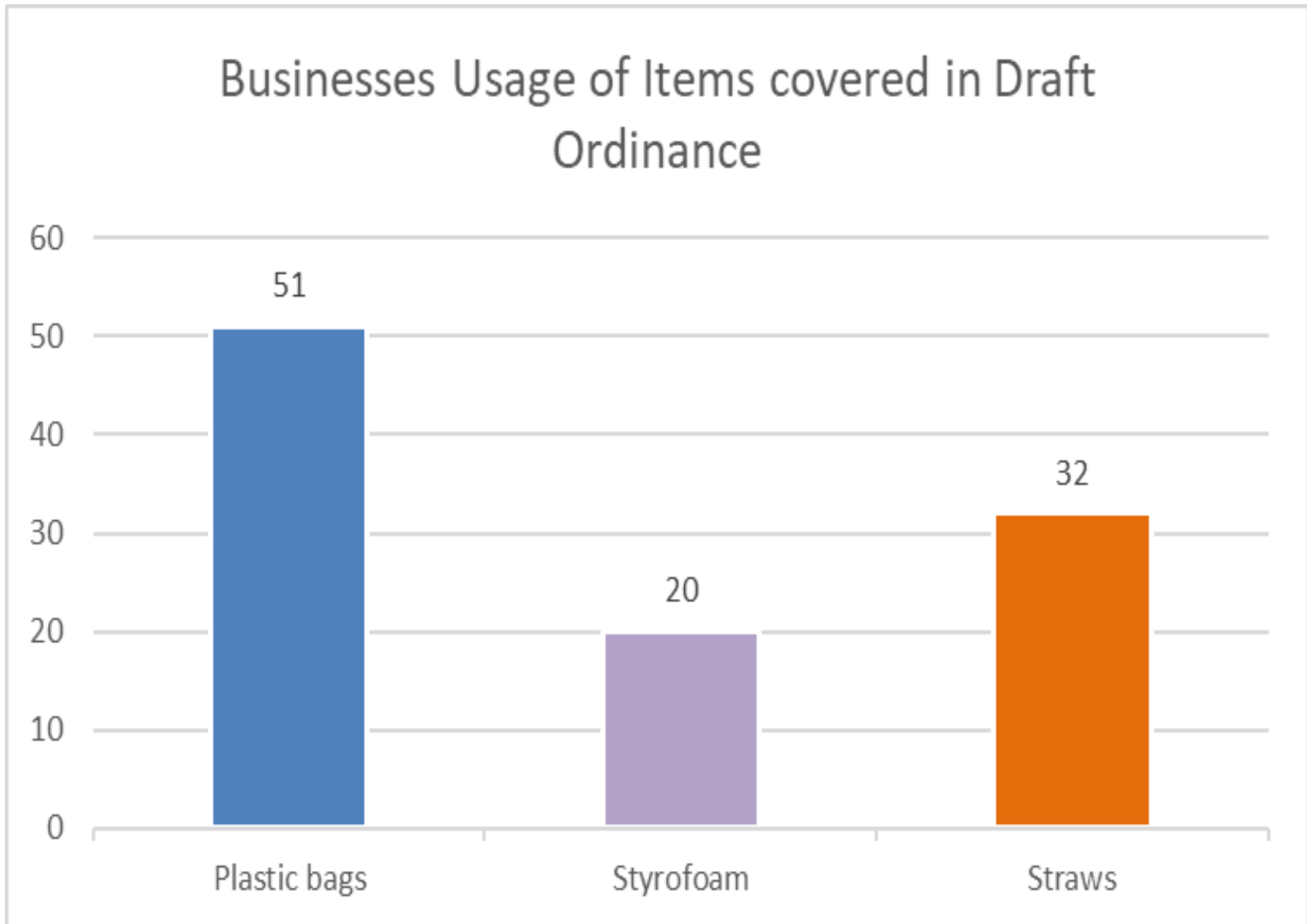
Results from Business Feedback

Businesses that use Plastic Bags



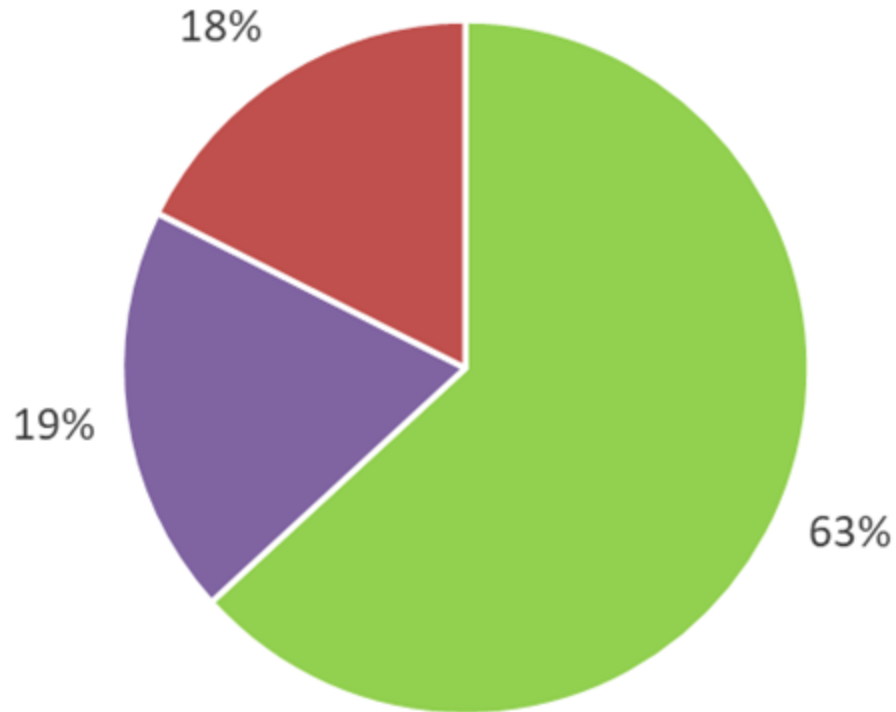
■ Yes ■ No

Results from Business Feedback



Results from Business Feedback

Would you support an ordinance prohibiting a business from providing single-use plastics to customers?



■ Yes ■ Ambivalent ■ No

Business Owner/Manager Comments

- We know it is coming, we will adapt!
- Another location in Philly and already switched to paper, already converting to paper.
- Already using paper bags, wants the township to create signage regarding the change.
- Banning single use plastics is a step in the right direction ... thank you!
- Love the idea of a ban! Feel that the fee should be optional for the business and not mandatory.
- Easy to switch to paper bags. Doing it for the environment for her great, great, great grandchildren.
- Education on viable and readily available alternatives is needed before legislating.
- Know that it is coming, I am not fighting city hall.
- Requests that the fee be optional. Businesses already build the price of bags into price for items purchased, hate to charge the customers extra fees. DO NOT OVERREGULATE!
- Request the information placed in the calendar about the plastic bag ban as a form of communication.
- People are surprised that we have plastic bags.
- I am all for it! Thought the ordinance was already in place and switched to paper products then switched back to plastic.
- No barriers to switching, second location in NJ which already bans plastic bags.
- No problem with the fee, concern about alternatives for the wings - haven't found a suitable one.

Feedback from surrounding townships post-implementation

Cheltenham Township:

It's going well! There are no plastic bags in Walmart, Home Depot, Target, ShopRite, Produce Junction or HMart to mention some of the biggest stores and they are charging for paper and/or reusable bags.

The EAC in our travels around the township saw a couple of chain clothing stores not in compliance that we reported to the township, one using plastic bags, one using paper bags and not charging the fee. I know the township's code enforcement has made at least one visit to a store to follow up on a complaint. When I've asked checkout people at stores, they say some people have complained but there's been no popular uprising demanding the return of plastic bags!

One thing we spent a lot of time worrying about was people with limited income for whom purchasing reusables bags could be a financial hardship. The school district's social workers were asked to talk to families for whom it might be an issue, we dropped off info at a senior housing place, we contacted people at the two community centers. One person requested 20 bags for seniors at her church. No one has contacted the township or any commissioner about this. So, it seems that just about everyone has reusable bags.

What I don't know is how well the restaurants are complying especially in terms of charging for bags. Basically, it's going really well. I expected more pushback but there's been none. I'm really glad we did this and stuck to our principles about the fee.

We have also noticed, as has the township's public works department, much less plastic bag litter in the township.

Feedback from surrounding townships post-implementation

Montgomery Township:

We have not received any feedback that we weren't expecting. The complaints we get are what we expected, with people against the ban saying they won't shop in our township anymore. That sampling of people appears to be small. Our Ordinance just went into effect April 22nd, so we'll see how it progresses

Something the EAC is discussing is helping to point residents toward charitable organizations where they can donate excess reusable bags so those don't also end up in a landfill.

If I were to do anything differently, I would give restaurants a completely different poster than retail locations. That version would go into detail about the nuances of takeout, product bag definitions/exemptions, etc. With that said, we have had very few issues and just a few clarification requests. We've received no complaints from residents so far that businesses are not following the Ordinance.

Feedback from surrounding townships post-implementation

Springfield Township:

- So far, Springfield has had no problems- a few on line grumbling- on neighborhood websites like nextdoor or Springfield Facebook pages.
- A little discussion with one restaurant about 3rd party delivery services charging for bags.
- But I was at the Acme in Flourtown yesterday - and that was a place I thought surely, I would hear complaints - people coming out with 10-12 plastic bags, and older folks - I thought- maybe stuck in their ways- not a fancy store -
- But there - everyone going in had two brightly colored reusable bags - and no one seemed uncomfortable with that- almost like it had always been this way - people adjust .

Any Questions?

Abington EAC Website:



<https://www.abingtonpa.gov/EAC>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Abington.EAC>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/abingtontownshipec/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/AbingtonEAC>

CONTACT US:

Abington EAC

Andrea Soo, Secretary

Karin McGarry-Rosen, Chair

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 **thanks you!**

Appendix

- Sources
- 10 Facts about Plastic Bags
- Additional microplastics info

Sources

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<https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/>

10 Facts about Plastic Bags

1. Americans use 100 billion plastic bags a year, which require 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture.[3](#)
2. Americans use an average of 365 plastic bags per person per year. People in Denmark use an average of four plastic bags per year.[4](#)
3. It takes only about 14 plastic bags for the equivalent of the gas required to drive one mile.[5](#)
4. In 2015 about 730,000 tons of plastic bags, sacks and wraps were generated (including PS, PP, HDPE, PVC & LDPE) in the United States, but more than 87% of those items are never recycled, winding up in landfills and the ocean.[6](#)
5. About 34% of dead [leatherback sea turtle](#) have ingested plastics.[7](#)
6. The plastic typically used in bottles, bags and food containers contains chemical additives such as endocrine disruptors, which are associated with negative health effects including cancers, birth defects and immune system suppression in humans and wildlife.[8](#)
7. It takes 1,000 years for a plastic bag to degrade in a landfill. Unfortunately, the bags don't break down completely but instead photo-degrade, becoming microplastics that absorb toxins and continue to pollute the environment.[9](#)
8. Chemical leachates from plastic bags impair the growth of the world's most important microorganisms, Prochlorococcus, a marine bacterium that provides one tenth of the world's oxygen.[10](#)
9. There were 1.9 million grocery bags and other plastic bags collected in the 2018 International Coastal Cleanup.[11](#)
10. In 2014, California became the first state to ban plastic bags. As of March 2018, 311 local bag ordinances have been adopted in 24 states, including Hawaii.[12](#) As of July 2018, 127 countries have adopted some form of legislation to regulate plastic bags.[13](#)