**BYO-BAG FOR RETAILERS**

The Newburyport Ordinance banning single-use plastic bags goes into effect on March 29, 2015. While the ordinance’s focus is on plastic bags, the intent is not to have shoppers switch to paper bags, but to encourage and make it easy for them to switch to reusable bags. You can begin to help your employees and customers make the shift to reusables right away.

***RETAILER BENEFIT***:

When shoppers bring their own bags, it can lead to a cost savings for you because you will not have to purchase, store and distribute as many carryout bags to customers. Just like shoppers you will also be helping our community move toward Zero Waste and reduce the environmental and resource impacts of paper and plastic carryout bag production, which benefit~~s~~ us all.

BYO-Bag programs can offer you an inexpensive way to create brand awareness and do some local advertising by offering your own reusable bag. Customers use attractive and functional reusable bags for many tasks, which serves to increase your visibility in the community.

You may also consider offering new products for your customers who are looking for alternatives for other single-use items; such as, reusable produce bags, water bottles, utensils-to-go etc.

***We have gathered some tips from retailers in other communities that have implemented a plastic bag ban to help smooth the transition.***

***BEFORE THE ORDINANCE EFFECTIVE DATE:***

Begin to display signs in visible locations such as cashier stations and entry doors to let customers know that single use plastic bags will no longer be available as of March 29, 2015.

Preparing your front-line employees to help customers make the shift to reus~~a~~ble bags is key, both so they understand why the community supported the ban and how they can play an important role in implementation, to benefit both your company and the community.

They can immediately begin to ask customers, *“Did you bring a bag you would like me to use?”* *“Would you like to purchase a reusable bag?”* *“Do you need a bag?”* instead of automatically giving them out.

***CHANGING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR:***

Here are some additional strategies others have used to encourage their customers to use reusable bags.

* + Display reminders in store parking lot/windows: “Don’t forget to grab your reusable bags?”
  + Give a reusable bag away for free if the customer makes a purchase over a set amount.
  + Have store-brand bags act as permanent coupons for 5% off all purchases.
  + Donate 5 cents to a local non-profit organization for each reusable bag used to pack customer purchases.
  + Give a discount of 5-15 cents for each reusable bag used to pack customer purchase.
  + Charge 5-15 cents each for paper bag.
  + Give a raffle ticket for free groceries for each reusable bag used to pack customer purchase.

***Thank you for doing your part to help make this transition a success!!***