

Resolution No. 1376-17

Council Member Zone

AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

Supporting Cuyahoga County Council Ordinance No. O2017-0006, sponsored by Cuyahoga County Council Members Simon and Miller, to charge a disposable bag fee, and urging its passage by all members of that body in order to minimize the deleterious effects of pollution caused by disposable bags on the environment and create a fund to effect positive clean-up activities.

WHEREAS, the precipitous increase in plastic production and plastic consumption over the past seventy years has resulted in approximately 269,000 tons of globally distributed plastic waste pollution, particularly in oceans, lakes, and other marine waterways; and

WHEREAS, Lake Erie is one of our greatest resources; and

WHEREAS, Cleveland sits in the middle of the southern shore of Lake Erie and 5.5 million pounds of plastic pollution contaminates Lake Erie every year, the second most plastic pollution of all the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, plastic waste is not bio-degradable and recycled plastic suffers from polymer degradation, limiting its useful life as a recyclable material, inevitably resulting in non-biodegradable microplastic particle pollution; and

WHEREAS, discarded disposable bags are a major source of litter, pollute our open spaces, harm and kill wildlife, clog storm drains resulting in localized flooding, end up as debris in our neighborhoods and waterways, and contribute to blight; and

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga County residents use over 319 million single use carryout bags annually, contributing to one million tons of landfill waste every year; and

WHEREAS, the typical useful life of a plastic bag is 12 minutes; and

WHEREAS, the pollution from disposable bags imposes external cleanup, removal and processing costs on our communities; and

WHEREAS, there is a compelling public interest in discouraging the wasteful use of disposable bags, mitigating the negative impact disposable bags have on our environment, and in defraying the costs of preventing and remediating environmental hazards; and

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga County Council currently has before it a proposed ordinance to charge fees in the amount not to exceed \$.10 per bag, for carry out bags on certain retail establishments throughout the County; and

WHEREAS, this proposed ordinance exempts Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) recipients and stores under 7000 square feet in order to ameliorate the costs for low-income persons and “mom and pop” retail establishments; and

WHEREAS, the proceeds from these fees will be used for pollution related clean-up activities including, but not limited to watershed, beachfront, roadway and greenspace litter reduction efforts, as well as purchases of re-usable bags for residents of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, and other efforts to minimize pollution and make our region cleaner; and,

WHEREAS, this Council supports the desire to combat the polluting effects of an accompanying blight caused by disposable bags on the environment in Cleveland and all of Cuyahoga County, as well as to promote sustainability in northeast Ohio by providing for a fund generated by these fees to provide for critical pollution prevention, remediation, and sustainability services as set forth in Cuyahoga County Ordinance No. O2017-0006; and

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WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety, now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That this Council supports Cuyahoga County Council Ordinance No. O2017-0006, sponsored by Cuyahoga County Council Members Simon and Miller, to charge a disposable bag fee, and urges its passage by all members of that body in order to minimize the deleterious effects of pollution caused by disposable bags on the environment and create a fund to effect positive clean-up activities.

Section 2. That the Clerk of Council is directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to Cuyahoga County Council Members Simon and Miller, all Cuyahoga County Council Members, and Mike Foley, Director, Department of Sustainability – Cuyahoga County.

Section 3. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

jho 11-13-17

FOR: Council Member Zone

