

# Council Bill 117345

## Proposed Plastic Bag Ban

Seattle City Council  
November 2011

# Plastics in Puget Sound

- 2011 Environment Washington Report shows plastic particles do not biodegrade and can remain in the ocean literally forever to be inadvertently ingested by animals large and small.
- Microplastics also absorb other toxics like DDT and PCBs, which are ingested by filter-feeders and shellfish, facilitating the accumulation of toxic chemicals up the food chain.



# Whale found with 20 plastic bags in stomach



“A gray whale that came ashore and later died near the Fauntleroy ferry dock last week had all that is pictured here in its stomach, all ingested while feeding in Puget Sound.”

Seattle Times, April 20, 2010

# Meeting our Zero Waste Goals



## Zero Waste Policy Framework

- Resolution 30990 adopted Zero Waste Policy in 2007
- Goals: 60% recycling by 2012, 70% by 2025; MSW cap at 438,000 tons (2006 level)



## Progress to date

- Residential curbside organics; Styrofoam ban
- Phone books opt out system
- 2010 Recycling Report: 53.7% recycling rate city wide

# Plastic bags by the numbers

292 million bags

- Seattleites use approximately 292 million plastic and 68 million paper disposable carryout bags per year; 360 million bag per-year total

13% recycled

- 82% of paper bags are recycled; only 13% of plastic bags are recycled

\$2.5 million to process

- Plastic bags represent 0.82 percent of the City's total waste stream (disposal and recycling), and cost just under \$2.5 million per year to collect and process, including litter clean up costs.

4.5% of people bringing reusables

- In 2009, at height of publicity campaigns, 4.5% of shoppers bringing reusable bags when shopping at national chain stores; 20% at higher-end stores.

# Plastic Bag policies around the country

San Francisco, CA

- Banned plastic bags in 2007.

Los Angeles County

- Banned plastic bags November 2010; includes a 10 cent fee on paper bags.

Portland, OR

- Banned plastic bags in summer 2011.

Edmonds, WA

- Banned plastic bags in 2009; law was implemented in August 2010.

Bellingham, WA

- Banned plastic bags in 2011, in the model Seattle is proposing; legislation to be implement in summer 2012.

Washington, D.C.

- Implemented a 5 cent fee on paper and plastic bags in 2009; reduced disposable bag use by 80% citywide in first year.

# The Bellingham model



# The Nickel

Making it work for the environment, business and low income families

## Business

- Retailers keep the five cents to offset costs increased costs of paper

## Environment

- Nickel reminds shoppers to bring reusable bags and minimizes shift to paper bags

## Equity

- Low income participants in food assistance programs including WIC, SNAP and TANF exempt



# Timeline



# Questions?

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