



Reusable Bag Ordinance

Information for Residents

What is Arcata's Reusable Bag Ordinance?

- Starting February 1, 2014, retail stores may not distribute single-use plastic bags at check stands.
- Starting August 1, 2014, stores may continue to distribute recyclable paper bags only through the sale of each bag at for a minimum 10 cent charge.

Why is the city of Arcata restricting single-use plastic carryout bags?

The Ordinance seeks to encourage customers to reduce litter and waste by encouraging use of reusable bags. Single-use plastic bags are one of the most common litter items found in creek, park and roadside cleanups and the impacts of plastic pollution on marine life are well documented. The average single-use plastic bag is made from nonrenewable natural resources with limited recycling options. While single use paper bags are recyclable, their manufacture, transportation, disposal and/or recycling use resources too.

A sturdy reusable bag can replace hundreds of single-use bags and similar bag ordinances have significantly reduced litter in cities and countries around the world.

How can I avoid paying 10 cents per bag?

Remember to bring reusable bags to the store or decline a bag when making a purchase.

Who keeps the charge for the recyclable paper bags distributed at the point of sale?

The charge is kept entirely by each store to offset the costs of the recyclable paper bags. The charge is not subject to tax per the California State Board of Equalization.

What about produce and bulk item bags?

Protective bags for produce, bulk food, hardware etc. designed to carry items to the checkout stand can be used without charge, although reusable options are encouraged and are available for sale in many locations.

How can I remember my bag?

Keep reusable bags by the door, in your car or near your keys. Keep foldable bags in pockets, backpacks and purses.

How will this ordinance help the environment?

Arcata's Ordinance is estimated to eliminate 7 million single use bags each year reducing pollution and landfill waste.

How will the ordinance affect low-income residents?

Customers participating in supplemental food programs such as WIC, CalFresh or SNAP are exempt from the bag charge.



For More Information - City of Arcata

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