

Southampton Village bans plastic bags

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Paper or plastic?

Shoppers in [Southampton Village](#) should expect to no longer hear that age-old question, now that the village board has passed legislation banning plastic bags from being used at retail establishments throughout the village.

Southampton Village becomes the first municipality in New York to mandate the discontinuance of plastic bags.

The village board passed the bag ban Tuesday night, with only one dissenting vote coming from Trustee Paul Robinson, who said the bill could be seen as a type of over-legislating.

Many supporters of the bill didn't agree with Robinson's views though.

Tara Bono, Long Island program coordinator for Farmingdale-based [Citizens Campaign for the Environment](#), attended a public hearing earlier this month, speaking in favor of the plastic bag ban prior to the vote, informing the board of how plastic bags can take hundreds of years to decompose and release harmful chemicals into the environment.

"Southampton Village is the first to act against plastic pollution, but they definitely won't be the last," Bono said. "This bag ban is an exciting and proactive move that will keep our bays, estuaries and oceans free of plastic pollution. Gone are the days of excessive double bagging with unnecessary plastic bags."

Not everyone in attendance was as thrilled with the bag ban as Bono. Several in attendance representing plastics companies and retailers made unsuccessful last ditch attempts to stave off the measure from being approved by the village board.

Under the provisions of the new law, which goes into effect six months from its approval, stores would be forbidden to distribute any plastic bags smaller than 28x36 inches in size, or thin produce plastic bags, at a point of sale. Only recyclable paper bags or reusable bags will be allowed to be given to customers to hold their items.

Penalties for violation of the new plastic bag ban include a fine of up to \$1,000 or up to 15 days in jail.

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