



Resolution No. 007-04-COE - January 25, 2005

**URGING THE MAYOR AND THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REQUIRING A FEE ON SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT BAGS.**

WHEREAS, Bags use increasingly scarce resources including energy, and create pollution from production through disposal; and,

WHEREAS, In 1999, more than 14 million trees were felled to produce the 10 billion paper grocery bags used by Americans ; and,

WHEREAS, In the U.S. alone, an estimated 12,000,000 barrels of oil are required to produce the 100 billion plastic bags used annually ; and,

WHEREAS, Bags create significant litter problems for San Francisco's streets, beaches, sewer system and the marine environment; and,

WHEREAS, In every square mile of ocean it is estimated that there are over 46,000 pieces of plastic, of which plastic bags are a component ; and,

WHEREAS, Over 100,000 marine animals die every year from plastic entanglement ; and,

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Commission on the Environment and Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco adopted citywide goals of 75% landfill diversion by 2010 and zero waste by 2020; and,

WHEREAS, Bags are perceived as disposable products and are an impediment to San Francisco's landfill diversion and other goals; and,

WHEREAS, Plastic bags are difficult to recycle or compost and are currently major contaminants in San Francisco's recycling and composting programs; and,

WHEREAS, Nationally only 0.6 percent of plastic bags are recycled ; and,

WHEREAS, Dozens of governments around the world have placed fees on bags or even banned plastic bags; and,

WHEREAS, A fee of 15 cents per bag on plastic shopping bags in the Republic of Ireland has cut their use by more than 90% and raised millions of euros to be spent on environmental projects ; and,

WHEREAS, The ordinance should include measures to assure that any fee not adversely impact residents with low or fixed incomes and residents with large families; and,

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SFEnvironment is a department of the City & County of San Francisco.

WHEREAS, Mayor Newsom and Supervisor Mirkarimi have introduced a resolution instructing the Department of the Environment to complete a nexus study with an independent consultant on a local fee for supermarket checkout bags, Board of Supervisors file number 050062; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Department of the Environment contract with an independent, external entity to complete a nexus study in order to identify the relationship between the use of disposable supermarket checkout bags and various costs to the City, and to determine the legality and appropriateness of a local fee on these bags; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, This study or an additional external study should determine the economic impact of this fee on San Francisco residents, particularly those residents with low or fixed incomes and residents with large families; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the ordinance mitigate any adverse impacts on residents with low or fixed incomes and residents with large families; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of the Environment should work with the Office of the Treasurer, City and County of San Francisco, to determine the cost of collecting and disbursing user fees, which must be included in nexus; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a Scope Committee be formed to insure the success and completeness of the nexus study and report back to the Commission at the next Commission meeting; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to adopt an ordinance requiring a 17 cent fee on each bag, or such fee as determined by the nexus study, provided at supermarket checkout counters to reduce the proliferation of unnecessary bags and provide funds to mitigate the negative impacts caused by them; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the ordinance require supermarkets to submit the fee to the San Francisco Treasurer to then be distributed by the Department of the Environment for related purposes and programs to be outlined in the ordinance, but be allowed to keep up to half of the fee for Department of the Environment approved programs such as providing discounted durable reusable checkout bags to low income residents, compostable bags in produce and bulk aisles, compostable bags and food service ware on store shelves, in-store collection of bags and other packaging for recycling, and outreach on waste prevention and recycling programs; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the ordinance require supermarkets to provide an annual report to the Department of the Environment summarizing bag revenues and program expenditures, and submit any funds collected from bag fees that remain unspent or allocated to unapproved programs at the end of each calendar year to the San Francisco Treasurer to be distributed by the Department of the Environment; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the ordinance contain provisions to allow the Department of the Environment to adjust the amount of the fee retained by supermarkets and in the future apply the fee beyond checkout bags and to smaller markets, drug stores, department stores, hardware stores, dry cleaners, food takeout, newspapers and other bag distributors; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the fee not be implemented for a period of six months after the passage of the ordinance to allow for public education which will insure the effective implementation of the program.

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Commission on the Environment at its special meeting on January 25, 2005.

Monica Fish, Commission Secretary

Vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Crowder, Pelosi Jr., Desser, King, Mok, Rodriguez, Wald

Noes: None

Absent: None