



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023

DEM REMINDS PUBLIC THAT PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION ACT REGULATIONS GO INTO EFFECT IN THE NEW YEAR

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is reminding the public that the Plastic Waste Reduction Act [passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly in the 2022 session](#) and signed into law by Governor Dan McKee, will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2024. The law bans retail establishments from providing single-use plastic bags to customers at the point of sale.

Eighteen of 39 Rhode Island communities have passed similar plastic bag bans. The law ensures a uniform and consistent legal standard statewide on plastic bags. [Click here to view the regulations.](#)

The law, authored by Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero and Representative Carol Hagan McEntee, directed DEM [to conduct a cost benefit analysis](#) along with drafting regulations to implement the law. DEM [held a hearing on the regulations on Sept. 26](#) and [the public comment period closed on Oct. 1](#). DEM has engaged in outreach to industry and businesses to remind them of the regulations.

With the holiday shopping season in full swing, DEM reminds consumers that by bringing their own reusable bag whenever they shop, they are doing their part to reduce litter and waste and help lessen the harmful effects of single-use plastics on Rhode Island's environment. By keeping reusable bags in the trunk of your car or storing them near a door or coat closet, shoppers will be more likely to remember them on the way out to get groceries or go holiday shopping.



Unightly, harmful, toxic coastal litter. Misquamicut State Beach, Westerly.

“The Plastic Waste Reduction Act, which I was proud to sign last year, shows that Rhode Island is committed to addressing plastic pollution,” said Governor Dan McKee. “Single-use plastic bags have many environmental impacts on the health of our local waters and wildlife and are a major component of unsightly litter. Keeping our natural spaces clean is everyone’s responsibility and by bringing reusable bags whenever you shop, consumers are protecting our natural heritage and helping [keep Rhody litter free.](#)”

“Eliminating the retail distribution of single-use plastic bags helps prevent litter and plastic debris from entering Narragansett Bay and our local waters, which are central to the Ocean State’s environment, way of life, and economy,” said DEM Director Terry Gray. “A more sustainable world starts with all of us, and DEM remains committed to promoting sustainability throughout our programs and operations. We continue to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for sustainable materials management.”

“From microplastics in our waters to litter on our streets, the negative impacts of plastic pollution are easily seen,” said Senate President Dominick J. Ruggiero. “Beyond the many environmental and social benefits of reducing reliance on single-use plastic bags, the Plastic Waste Reduction Act will help save money by reducing the significant recycling and disposal issues that plastic bags pose.”

“The Plastic Waste Reduction Act will reduce the amount of single use plastic bags that end up in the landfill, in our local waters, and as litter in our communities,” said Representative Carol Hagan McEntee. “Rhode Islanders can make a tangible difference in reducing plastic pollution by reminding their family, friends, and neighbors to bring their reusable bags whenever they shop.”

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