

Order 260-13/14

Passage: 6-3 (Mavodones ,Coyne ,Leeman) on 6/16/2014

Effective 4/15/2015

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**CITY OF PORTLAND  
IN THE CITY COUNCIL**

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**AMENDMENT TO PORTLAND CITY CODE  
CHAPTER 12 GARBAGE, WASTES AND JUNK  
ARTICLE IX. Waste Reduction  
Sections 12-230 through 12-237  
Re: Bag Fee**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PORTLAND,  
MAINE IN CITY COUNCIL ASSEMBLED AS FOLLOWS:**

*1. That Chapter 12, Article IX, Sections 12-230 thru 12-237 of  
the Portland City Code is hereby enacted as follows:*

**12-230. Findings; purposes.**

The city council hereby finds as follows:

(1) The City Council has a duty to protect the natural environment and the health of its citizens and visitors; and

(2) The use of single-use carryout bags has severe environmental impacts on a local and global scale, including greenhouse gas emissions, litter, harm to wildlife, atmospheric acidification, water consumption and solid waste generation; and

(3) Despite recycling and voluntary solutions to control pollution from single-use carryout bags, very few single-use carryout bags are recycled; and

(4) Numerous studies have documented the prevalence of single-use carryout bags littering the environment, blocking storm drains, and endangering wildlife; and

(5) The City of Portland's taxpayers must bear costs associated with the effects of single-use carryout bags on the solid waste stream, drainage, litter, and wildlife; and

(6) The City, through its policies, programs, and laws, supports efforts to reduce the amount of waste that must be disposed of by supporting the waste management hierarchy

(reduce, reuse, recycle, compost, waste-to-energy landfill)and supports efforts to achieve State recycle goals; and

(7) From an environmental and economic perspective, the best alternative to single-use carryout bags is to shift to reusable bags for shopping; and

(8) Whereas the City Council of the City of Portland aims to conserve resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and litter and to protect the public health and welfare, including wildlife, all of which increase the quality of life for the City's residents and visitors; and

(9) Evidence indicates that the vast majority of single-use carryout bags are used for the bagging and carryout of products purchased from Stores, as those business are defined in this Ordinance; and

(10) Studies document and participating municipalities report that prohibiting the free distribution of single-use carryout bags will dramatically reduce the use of those types of bags; and

(11) The City Council of the City of Portland believes that residents and visitors should use reusable bags and that prohibiting the free distribution of single-use carryout bags by stores is appropriate and will incentivize the use of reusable bags; and

(12) It is in the best interests of the health, safety and welfare of citizens and visitors of Portland to reduce the cost to the City of solid waste disposal, and to protect our environment and our natural resources by reducing the distribution of single-use carryout bags and incentivizing the use of reusable bags at Stores, as defined in this Ordinance.

#### 12-231. **Definitions.**

As used in this Ordinance the following terms have the following meanings:

*Single-use carryout Bag.* Single-use Carryout Bag means a bag other than a Reusable bag provided at the check stand, cash register, point of sale or other point of departure for the purpose of transporting food or merchandise out of the establishment. The term Single-Use Carryout Bag includes compostable and biodegradable bags but does not include reusable

bags, produce bags, product bags or bags provided by pharmacists to contain prescription drugs.

*Produce bag or Product bag.* The terms *produce bag* or *product bag* mean any bag without handles used exclusively to carry produce, meats, other food items or merchandise to the point of sale inside a store or to prevent such items from coming into direct contact with other purchased items.

*Reusable Bag* means a bag that is:

- (a) Designed and manufactured to withstand repeated uses over a period of time;
- (b) Is machine washable or, made from a material that can be cleaned and disinfected regularly;
- (c) That is at least 2.25 mil thick if made from plastic;
- (d) Has a minimum lifetime of 75 uses; and
- (e) Has the capability of carrying a minimum of 18 pounds.

*Store.* The term *Store* means any of the following retail establishments located within the City of Portland:

- (a) a full-line, self-service market located in a permanent building, operating year-round, and which sells at retail a line of staple foodstuffs, meats, produce, household supplies, dairy products or other perishable items.
- (b) a drug store, pharmacy, supermarket, grocery store, convenience food store, food mart, or other entity engaged in the retail sale of a limited line of goods that includes milk, bread, soda, and snack foods.

"Store" does not mean:

Businesses at which foodstuffs are an incidental part of the business. Food sales will be considered to be "incidental" if such sales comprise no more than 2 percent of the business's gross sales in the City as measured by the dollar value of food sales as a percentage of the dollar value of total sales at any single location.

**12-232. Single-Use Carryout Bag**

(a) No Store shall provide a Single-Use Carryout Bag to a Customer at the check stand, cash register, point of sale or other point of departure for the purpose of transporting food or merchandise out of the establishment except as provided in this Section.

(b) A Store may make available for sale to a Customer a Single-Use Carryout Bag for a minimum charge of five cents (\$0.05).

(c) All monies collected by a Store for Single-Use Carryout Bags under this Chapter may be used by the Store for any lawful purpose.

(d) All Stores must post signage clearly indicating the per bag charge for Single-Use Carryout Bags.

(e) Notwithstanding this Section, no Store may make available for sale a Single-Use Carryout Bag unless the amount of the sale of the Single-Use Carryout is separately itemized on the sale receipt.

(f) No Store shall rebate or otherwise reimburse a customer any portion of the minimum charge required in Subsection (b).

**12-233. Exemptions.**

A Store shall be exempt from the provisions of this Article, in a situation deemed by the City Manager to be an emergency for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety.

**12-234. Record Keeping and Inspection.**

Every Store shall keep complete and accurate records or documents of the purchase and sale of any Single-Use Carryout Bag, for a minimum period of three (3) years from the date of purchase and sale, which record shall be available for inspection at no cost to the City during regular business hours by any City employee authorized to enforce this Article. Unless an alternative location or method of review is mutually agreed upon, the records or documents shall be available at the Store's address. The provision of false information including incomplete records or documents to the City shall be a violation of this Article.

**12-235. Violations and enforcement.**

The City Manager or his/her designee(s) shall have the primary responsibility for enforcement of this Article. If the City Manager or his/her designee(s) determines that a violation of this Article has occurred, he/she shall issue a written warning notice to the Store that a violation has occurred. Subsequent violations of the Article shall be subject to the penalties set forth below.

Violations of this Article shall be punishable by fines as follows:

- (a) A fine not exceeding \$250 for the first violation in a one-year period;
- (b) A fine not exceeding \$500 for the second and each subsequent violation in a one-year period.

**12-236. Effective Date**

The provisions of this ordinance shall become effective on April 15, 2015.

**12-237. Severability.**

If any part or provision of this Article or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the remainder of the Article, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, provisions of this Article are severable.