

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482-5992

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Website: www.wellesleyma.gov/NRC**Wellesley Natural Resources Commission Proposes a Ban on Plastic Check-Out Bags
*Public Invited to Share Feedback at a Hearing on Thurs., February 11***

February 4, 2016 – (Wellesley, MA) Following several years of study concerning the rising tide of plastic litter in Wellesley parks and conservation areas, the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission is proposing a bylaw banning the distribution of single-use plastic check-out bags in the town. The five-member commission will present the proposal at Wellesley Annual Town Meeting on March 28, 2016.

To date, 18 communities in the Commonwealth have already approved restrictions on plastic shopping bags, including Newton and Natick which border Wellesley.

Several key findings led to the NRC bag ban proposal, among them the 2015 decision by the Wellesley Recycling and Disposal Facility (RDF) to stop accepting plastic bags for recycling. The commission is also concerned about the damaging effects of plastics on wildlife and the environment.

“Plastic bags wind up in the trees, in our rivers and wetlands, and ultimately in our oceans. This petroleum-based plastic never biodegrades—it just breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces that remain in the environment for at least 1,000 years,” said Lise Olney, NRC Vice Chair. “Now that the RDF is no longer able to recycle the bags, we have no way of managing them responsibly—they either end up as litter or in a landfill. We hope this ban will encourage residents to switch to reusable bags when they shop.”

The NRC is seeking public feedback before finalizing the specifics of the proposal. A public hearing is scheduled for **Thursday, February 11, 2016, at 7:30 p.m.** in the Great Hall of Wellesley Town Hall, and more information is available on the NRC website at http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_NRC/Plastic%20Bag%20Ban.

To further educate the public, the NRC is also co-sponsoring the state-wide Mass Green Summit on **Saturday, February 20, 2016, from 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.** in the Wakelin Room of the Wellesley Free Library. The event is organized by the Mass Green Network and is open to anyone interested in reducing plastic bags, polystyrene, and/or other sources of plastic waste. Participants are asked to sign up in advance at <http://www.massgreen.org/mass-green-summit.html>. Other event co-sponsors include Toxics Action Center, Sierra Club MA, and MassPIRG.

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