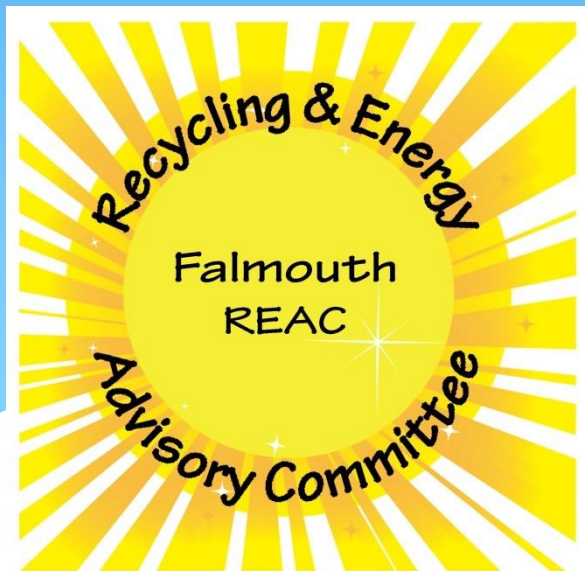


Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee (REAC) Recommendation Report RE: Single-
Use Plastic Shopping Bags



Presented to the Falmouth
Town Council January 12th, 2015

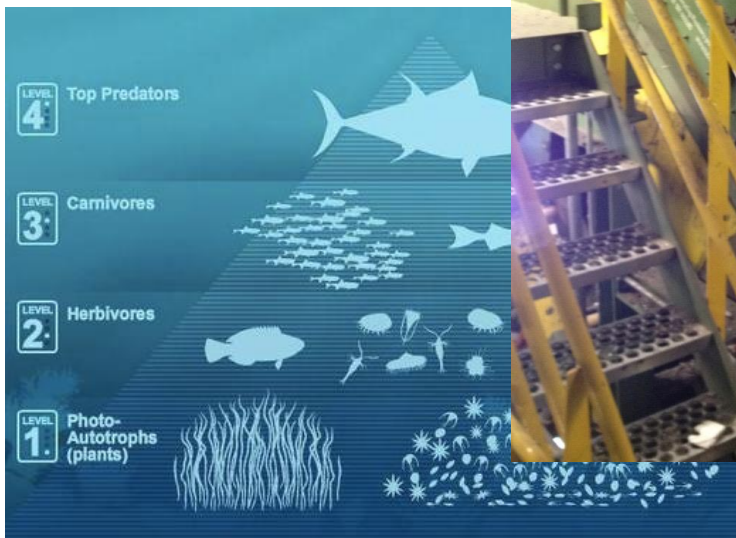
Background Information

- In June of 2014 residents wrote Council
- New regulation in Portland—
effective April 2015
- Council asked REAC to conduct research
- Offer recommended policy

Plastic bags in Falmouth

- With preliminary research conducted, it is known that over **55,900 plastic bags per month are given out by one large Falmouth retailer alone**. Assuming the other two large retailers in Falmouth give out roughly the same amount of plastic bags each month, it is estimated that over **2 million single-use plastic shopping bags are given out each year in Falmouth by the three largest stores alone.**

Introduction to the problem— *Why are plastic bags an issue?*



Introduction to the problem— *Why are plastic bags an issue?*

- ❑ The core issue with plastic bags is their presence in the natural environment (especially the ocean)
- ❑ Plastic bags degrade, making them available to marine food chains
- ❑ Plastic bags accumulate and clog storm water culverts and water management machinery
- ❑ They become problematic at ecomaine's recycling facility

ecomaine's recycling facility



“In the first photo you'll see the paper star screen without any recyclables on it. It should give you a good look at how much ...plastic film, rope, string, wire, electrical cord, cloth, etc. gets wrapped around the axels.

Naturally that fills in the spaces in the machine preventing it from sorting everything. It routinely gets so clogged that it needs to be shut down and cleaned out.”

Leo Maheu—ecomaine



“The second photo is of Richard, our fork truck driver, pulling plastic film out from bales of cardboard that have just come from the baler. That cardboard had already been sorted for contamination and there still was quite the amount that made it in”

Leo Maheu—ecomaine



“And the last photo is of the composition of our bypass bay. The bay is where we put all the trash that comes in with the recycling. Typically our bypass rate is running somewhere between 6% and 8%. The majority of that as you can see, is plastic film.”

Leo Maheu—ecomaine

Steps Taken

Polled Residents
on Voting Day

Held Business
Information
Meeting

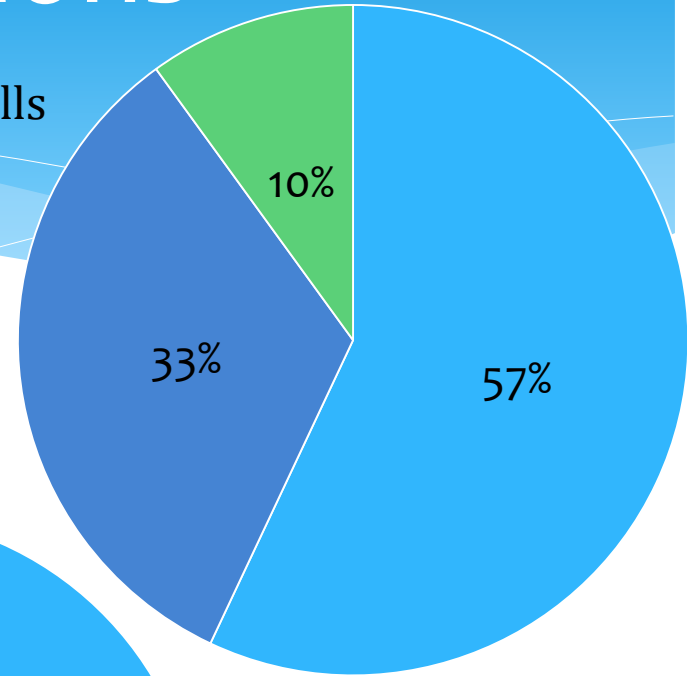
Created/
Distributed
Online Poll

Collaborated
with Surfriders
and NRCM

Communicated
With MA
communities

Survey Questions

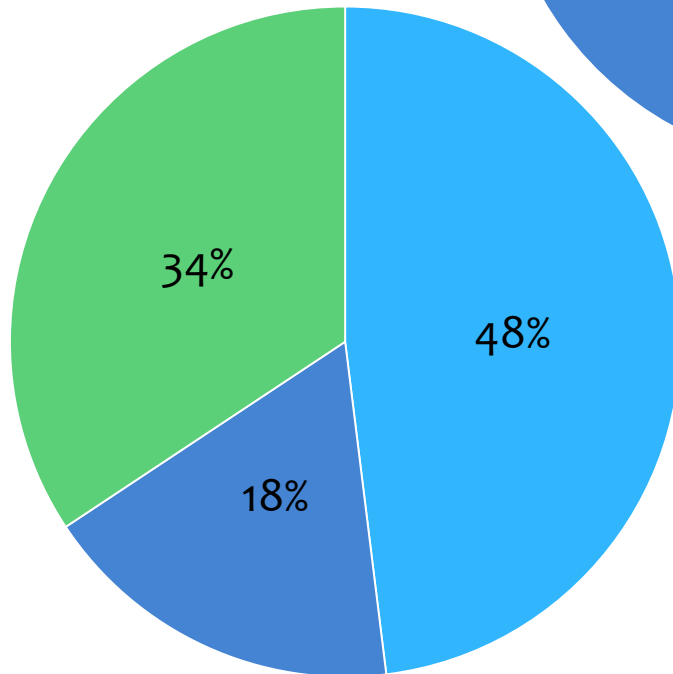
Election polls



Do you use reusable shopping bags?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

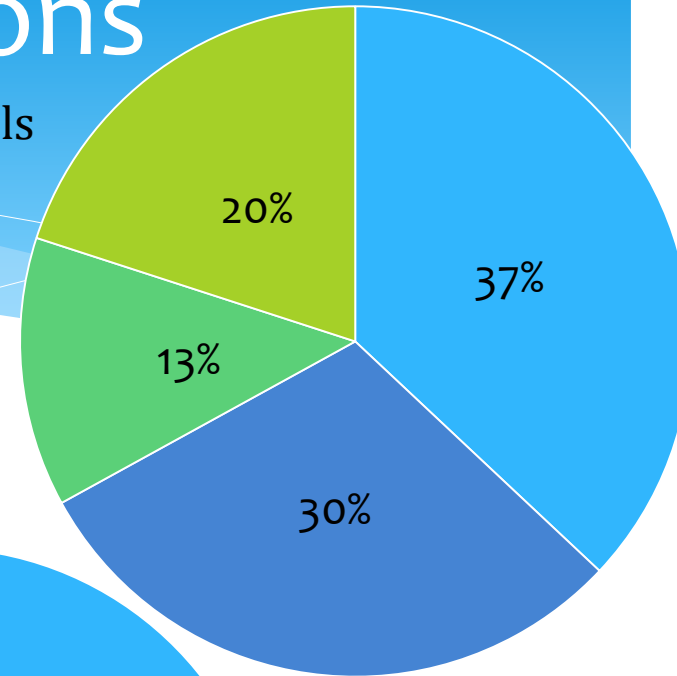
- Use Reusables
- Sometimes Use Reusables
- Don't Use Reusables



Online survey

Survey Questions

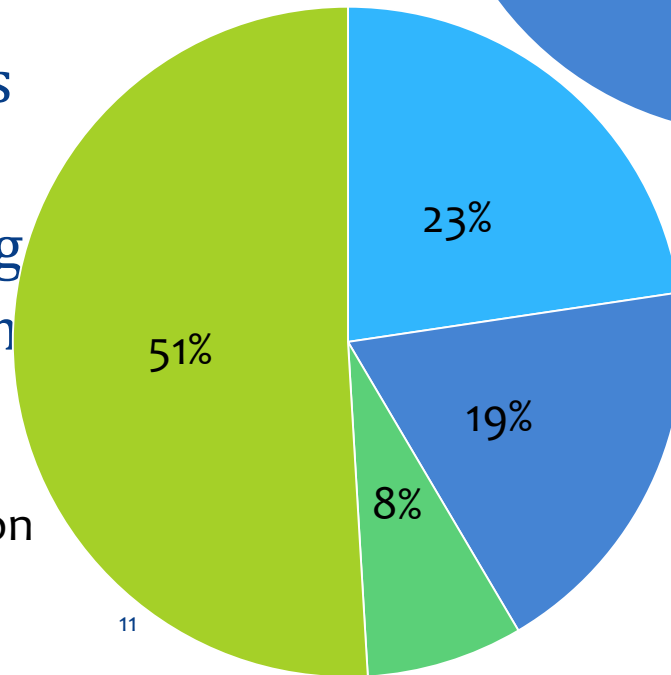
Election polls



If the Town adopted regulation on single-use plastic shopping bags, which of the following would you support?

- Ban of plastic bags
- 5 cent fee per bag
- 25 cent fee per bag
- I do not agree with regulating their use

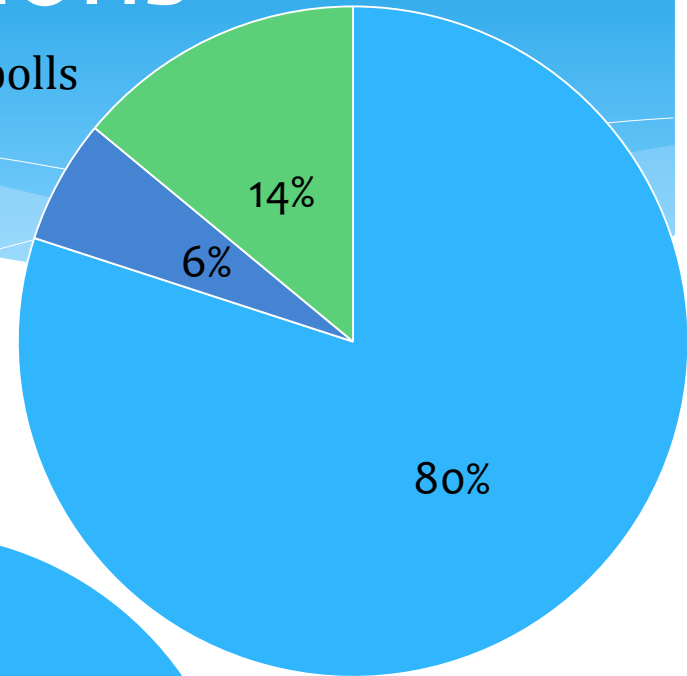
■ Ban ■ \$0.05
■ \$0.25 ■ No Regulation



Online survey

Survey Questions

Election polls



Would you commit to using reusable shopping bags while shopping in Falmouth?

Yes

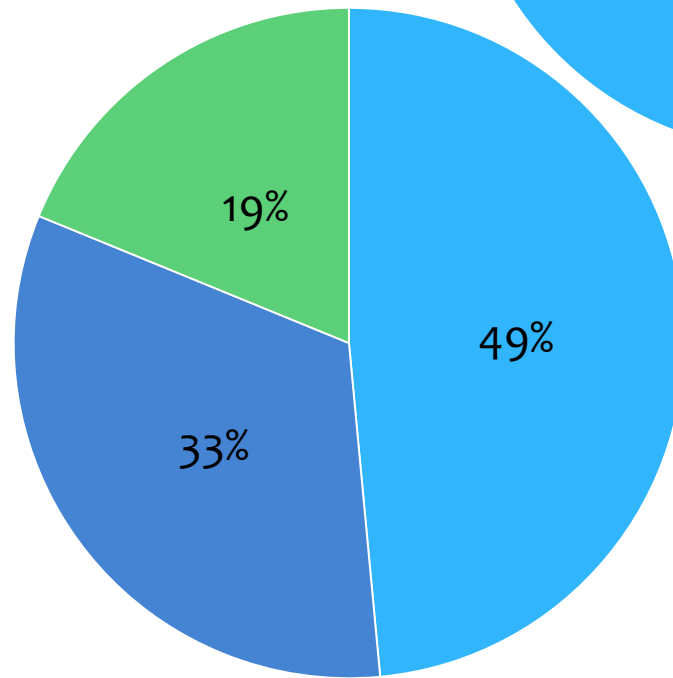
No

Maybe

■ Yes

■ No

■ Maybe



Online survey

Long Term Objective

- ❑ To mitigate the instances of plastic debris in the environment
- ❑ To raise environmental awareness within our community
- ❑ Encourage a paradigm shift away from single-use bags to reusable bags

Education & Outreach

- REAC hosted “Bag It” last summer
- Plans to show it again (schools)
- Recommends:
 - Updating REAC town page with plentiful information
 - Work with schools and student groups
 - Establish education program/campaign
 - Additional education for consumers and retailers on problem with plastic bags and educate on new ordinance

Recommendation:

- *Develop a phase-in approach for regulating the use of single-use plastic shopping bags*
 - Year one—mirror Portland and place a 5 cent fee on both paper and plastic. During this first year education will be a primary focus
 - Year two—ban plastic shopping bags and continue 5 cent fee on paper bags
- *Common exemptions often include: dry cleaners, pharmacy bags, bags for meat and produce, as well as customers on food assistance programs*

Further Research

- The Town Council should research and finalize the following important details:
 - The associated fee with paper and plastic bags
 - Violations, penalties and enforcement
 - Effective time of ordinance
 - Who the ordinance applies to

To complete the online survey...

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/X6LHXLX>
- Let us know your thoughts!

Questions?

