



## Plastic Shopping Bags: Reduction of Use in Carroll County

### *Scope*

#### **Background & Purpose**

“In the USA, local governments have the primary responsibility to manage MSW [municipal solid waste]. However, local governments lack the authority to explicitly shift costs or responsibility back onto the producer for specific problem wastes. A particularly problematic waste for local governments is the single-use plastic bag. In 2014, in the USA, 103.465 billion single-use plastic shopping bags were consumed. Because of their extremely low recyclability rate, plastic bags remain a significant source of land-based litter and marine debris and impair stormwater management systems. They also reduce the effectiveness of automated recycling systems. In response, local governments increasingly have adopted a variety of measures specifically intended to reduce the store-level consumption of single-use shopping bags in 5 major categories: bans, imposition of fees and taxes, establishing minimum product design of bags, requiring consumer education, and mandating retailer take-back programs.” (Wagner, Travis P. (2017, September). “Abstract,” *Reducing single-use plastic shopping bags in the USA*. Department of Environmental Science & Policy, University of Southern Maine. Accessed July 13, 2018 from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0956053X17306335>.)



Photo courtesy photos-public-domain.com

At the Board’s request, the EAC will research and provide a report on options available to Carroll County to reduce the use of plastic bags, as well as possible options for feasible recycling of plastic bags.

#### **Overall Task:**

The EAC will research potential measures to reduce the use of ♻️ #s 2 and 4 plastic bags in Carroll County to determine:

- Importance of reducing plastic bag usage,
- Current handling and disposal of plastic bags in Carroll County,
- Steps taken through the General Assembly or other Maryland jurisdictions to reduce use of plastic bag,
- Benefits/opportunities and disadvantages/challenges of reduction in Carroll County, and
- Options for reducing plastic bag usage in Carroll County,
- Possible next steps for Board to consider if decision to move forward.

#### **Work Product:**

A report with findings and possible next steps to move forward, if applicable, will be prepared by the EAC and presented to the Board.

#### **Timeline:**

Completion anticipated in Winter 2019.