



Dear Business Organization and Business Owner,

Enclosed is important communication regarding the Town of Westerly's Plastic Bag ban which was passed on April 22nd 2019 and is effective January 1, 2020.

This information has been provided by the Plastic Reduction Committee, a volunteer organization appointed per town resolution adopted on 10/1/2018.

Thank you for doing your part for the health and wellness of our citizens, environment, and the future of our community.

Best and Kind Regards,
Theresa Cavalier, Chairwoman on behalf of
The Westerly Plastic Reduction Committee
Find us on Facebook at: [@westerlyplasticreductioncommittee](#)

A) **What** are the specifics (definitions, exemptions, violation penalties) of the Plastic Bag Ban that is effective 1/1/2020

Copy of Ordinance:

<https://www.WesterlyRI.gov/PlasticBagOrdinance>

B) **Why** is the ban on single-use plastic bags so important?

It is important to remind people that we are not trying to “ban our way to an improved environment,” but we feel that the elimination of single-use plastic is considered a good first step to encourage people and businesses to start making better choices with a goal of reducing all single-use plastics. Westerly is dependent on a healthy ocean, it makes sense that ocean health is a constant priority and we are a participant for environmental sustainability. As a community, if we work together, respect the concerns of each other, listen, and find a way to make it work, we will succeed for everyone. There isn't a perfect solution but we feel moving forward with a community ban will increase awareness **to be mindful of all single-use items and start a wave of change.**

<https://greentumble.com/10-reasons-why-plastic-bags-should-be-banned/>

<https://www.naturespath.com/en-us/blog/single-use-plastics-bad-can/>

C) **Who** else is affected by the ban:

Westerly Businesses are not alone. Westerly is 1 of 14 towns in Rhode Island to implement the same definitions found within the ordinance of bag ban, so an idea is to reach out to other business owners who have had to adapt and ask about their experience, ideas, and results. (Examples: Newport, Barrington)

Also speak to your suppliers: the more businesses ordering environmentally responsible products the more the supply/demand/and price are affected.

Thank you for doing your part.

D) **How** to Adapt:

Communication, Communication, Communication:

Logo ideas on the facebook page @westerlyplasticreductioncommittee and <https://westerlyri.gov/698/Plastics-Utilization-and-Commerce>

If you need to print material about BYOB (Bring Your Own Bag) Printing Plus is offering a discount on certain products to communicate Bag Ban.

<https://www.printingplusri.com/contact>

"With a little work in advance, you and your staff will transition to comply with the ordinance with ease - and so will your customers."

- **TRAIN** personnel: Anticipate, Adapt, Achieve

<http://plasticbagbanreport.com/retailers-train-personnel-how-to-pack-reusable-bags/>

E) Use this as an **OPPORTUNITY** to transcend your business and branding

- <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/environment/environment-business/benefits>
- Add New Reusable Products
- Offer an incentive for customers to bring their own (bag, coffee mug, left over to go container, etc)
- Charge when customers do not bring their own (bag, charge for to go containers, etc)

F) FAQ:

Q: By eliminating plastic bags, the most common substitute will be paper bags. Aren't those just as bad for the environment?

Our goal is not to proliferate the usage of single-use paper, but we recognize that the initial launch of this proposed ordinance may come with a temporary increase of alternatives, presumably paper. As a consumer based society, perhaps if we demand that new paper bags are produced in the most efficient manner, we will see dramatic improvements in the process. It is our opinion that there hasn't been much innovation in this area. To incentivize the consumer to bring their own bag, shops and/or the ordinance could impose a small fee for providing a bag. This was done in the U.K. and within a 6-month period, the single-use bag usage dropped by 80%.

Q: Can we get an ordinance to eliminate the plastic garbage bags that we pay for from the town?

That is a different program and not part of our campaign, but is relevant to the larger topic of plastic. Our campaign solely is focused on single-use plastic bags to address a specific problem, inspire awareness of all single-use materials and build momentum for moving away from single-use items.