

June 20, 2012

TO: Bellingham retailers

RE: City of Bellingham's Plastic Bag Ordinance



The Bellingham City Council adopted regulations last year that prohibit single-use carry out plastic bags and the free distribution of paper bags provided by retailers at check out. This letter includes important information to help you understand how this change affects your business and how to meet the new requirements.

The ordinance takes effect on Aug. 1, 2012. Please take steps now so you'll be ready by Aug. 1:

1. Read the City of Bellingham's ordinance and other materials at www.cob.org/plasticbags
2. Use up your supply of single-use plastic and non-recycled content paper bags.
3. Encourage your customers to shop with reusable bags, such as by:
 - ✓ Thanking customers who bring their own bags.
 - ✓ Offering incentives to those who shop with reusable bags.
4. If you choose to sell paper bags that meet the new requirements for at least 5 cents each, plan to:
 - ✓ Separately itemize these charges on the sales receipt.
 - ✓ Identify these charges as taxable items.
 - ✓ Obtain paper bags for distribution that contain at least 40% recycled material.
5. Stay informed at www.cob.org/plasticbags
 - ✓ Check the website regularly for additional information for retailers.
 - ✓ Questions about the requirements can be directed to:
Email: plasticbags@cob.org Telephone: 360-778-7724

The ordinance was approved on July 25, 2011 by the Bellingham City Council after receiving encouragement and assistance from community volunteers, identifying support from local retailers, and reviewing the successes of other cities that have adopted similar regulations.

We are proud to be leaders among Washington cities in taking this first small step toward reducing the impacts of plastic in our community. Businesses located in our city play a key role in this important effort and for that we thank you very much. We understand we are asking a lot of our retailers with this new requirement, and we want to help you make a smooth transition. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terry Bornemann".

Terry Bornemann, President
Bellingham City Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Seth Fleetwood".

Seth Fleetwood, Ordinance Sponsor
Bellingham City Council