



## **Cuyahoga County Proposed Carryout Bag Fee – FAQs**

- **How much is the Fee?**

- Beginning in July 2018 a fee of ten cents (\$0.10) will be imposed for each paper or plastic single use carryout bag that a retail establishment provides to a customer.

- **When and Where will I pay this Ten-Cent Fee?**

- The ten-cent fee will be imposed at all retail establishments over 7,000 square feet, including supermarkets, convenience stores, shops, service stations, restaurants, and any other sales outlet where a customer can purchase goods. Occasional retailers (i.e. neighborhood arts festivals, seasonal farmers markets, etc.) would be exempt.
- Curb side and delivery services provided by retail establishments will be exempt from the ten-cent fee as well as pre-packaged bags such as newspaper bags, garbage bags, bulk packaging bags, meat packaging bags, etc.
- Customers who are enrolled in the federal public assistance food programs (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) will be exempt.

- **Why is this Ten-Cent fee needed?**

- 5.5 million pounds of plastic pollution contaminates Lake Erie every year. Lake Erie is one of our greatest resources, and contains the second most plastic pollution of all the Great Lakes.
- Single use carryout bags pollute the environment including our rivers and lakes, contributing to over 269,000 tons of pollution in the world's water, which then is consumed by fish and other wildlife, finding its way into the food chain.
- Cuyahoga County residents use over 319 million single use carryout bags annually, contributing to 1 million tons of landfill waste every year.
- Plastic bags only have an average useful life of 12 minutes but do not biodegrade for hundreds of years.
- Plastic bags are made from, contain and absorb toxic chemicals and become havens for harmful bacteria.
- Over 200 states and local governments throughout the United States have implemented a fee on disposable bags or completely banned plastic bags including Seattle, WA, Austin, TX, Eugene, OR, Honolulu, HI, Aspen, CO, Chicago, IL, Montgomery County, MD and San Francisco, CA.

- **How much annual revenue will the Ten-Cent fee generate?**
  - Based on current usage by Cuyahoga County residents, the ten-cent fee would generate \$31.9 million annually. However, the legislation is intended to reduce consumption of single use carryout bags, resulting in less revenue generated over time.
- **How many bags do I use every year and how much will I pay for the fee?**
  - The average adult uses 335 single use carryout bags per year, resulting in an average annual cost of \$33.50 per person for the ten-cent fee assuming you do not reduce usage of single use carry out bags. If you use reusable bags, you will not pay any fee.
- **What will the Ten-Cent fee be used for?**
  - Six cents (\$0.06) of the ten-cent fee will be used to remediate environmental hazards caused by single use carry out bags including cleaning up Lake Erie and other waterways, as well as litter removal throughout Cuyahoga County. The fee will also pay for public education to significantly reduce or eliminate the use of single-use plastic products. A small portion of this fee will be used to provide reusable and/or environmentally sustainable bags for socioeconomically disadvantaged customers.
  - Four cents (\$0.04) out of the ten-cent fee will be provided to the retail establishments to cover administrative costs to implement the fee.