



## Reducing Plastic Bag Use

- A recommendation to Council in support of a regional (County-wide) ban on single-use grocery bags
  - As the best approach to reducing our plastic bag use
  - Is regionally coordinated and consistent for all jurisdictions (7 cities and Thurston County)
  - Details of ban determined through stakeholders group



# County SWAC Supports Ban

## Thurston County Solid Waste Advisory Committee

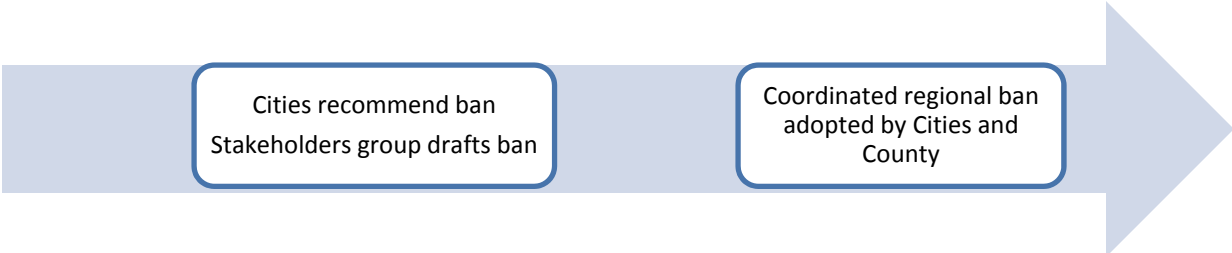
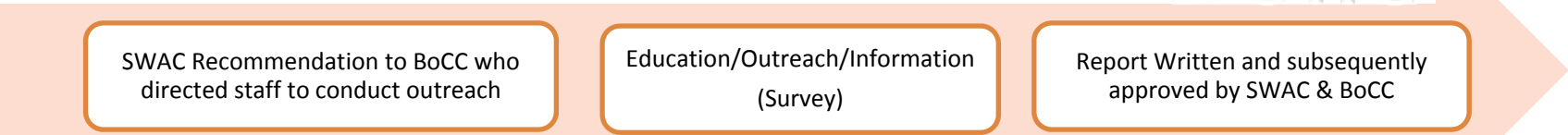
- Provides policy guidance to County Staff and BoCC on solid waste issues in Thurston County;
- Representation from incorporated cities;
- Port of Olympia;
- Citizens; and
- Recycling industry representation.

# Bag Reduction: Timeline of events

Done



Done



# Why are single-use plastic bags a problem?

- Single-use bags promote disposable behavior as accepted norm
- Made from fossil fuels (natural gas and oil)
- Only 5 to 8% recycled
- Bags end up in commingled recycle where it's a contaminant and clogs sorting machinery
- Education/encouragement to reduce their use and/or to recycle them is not working
- Light weight bags become airborne litter
- Endanger marine life & marine eco-system

# Why are single-use plastic bags a problem?



## **Where in Washington have Bags Been Banned?**

- Bainbridge Island, 11/2012
- Bellingham, 7/2011
- Edmonds, 7/2009
- Issaquah, 3/2013 large stores; 3/2014 small stores
- Mukilteo, 1/2013
- Port Townsend, 11/2012
- Seattle, 7/2012

# What about public opinion?

- Seattle stores report little to no problems with the bag ban.
- Olympia City Council received over 100 pledges in support of a ban
- Limited citizen comment in opposition
- Concern about food bank and their need for bags
- Concern for persons with disabilities
- Majority of respondents to County survey in favor of a ban

# What about retail and trade associations?

- Washington Grocers Association
- Washington Food Industry Association
  - Independent grocers



# Aligns with Toward Zero Waste Plan

- Goal 1: Reduce the overall waste generated in Olympia (garbage and recyclables).
  - *Metric: Reduce per/capita consumption by 5%*
- Goal 3: Manage Olympia's waste stream responsibly.

# What are the options for reducing bags?

- Voluntary education and outreach
- Product stewardship
- Taxes and fees
- Bans
- Hybrid (ban + fee)



## Questions | Discussion | Direction

Support a regionally coordinated ban that is consistent across jurisdictions and provides adequate lead time.