



General Government Committee

Briefing on Plastic Bag Ban Outreach and Communication

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Title

Briefing on Plastic Bag Ban Outreach and Communication

Recommended Action

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive and discuss information.

Report

Issue:

Briefing on plastic bag ban outreach and communication.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Spencer Orman, Senior Program Specialist, Public Works Waste ReSources,

Background and Analysis:

On October 15, 2013, the City Council approved Ordinance 6869 regulating the distribution of single-use plastic and biodegradable carry out bags. The ordinance requires retail establishments to collect a pass-through charge of \$.05 cents or greater per bag from customers who do not bring in a reusable bag and request recyclable paper carry-out bags. The retailer collects and retains the fee to help cover their expenses. The cities of Lacey, Tumwater, and unincorporated Thurston County have all passed similar ordinances.

Beginning in 2014, City staff made efforts to notify, prepare, and assist Olympia businesses on how to comply with the upcoming ban. Outreach included information on the City's web site, partnering with Thurston County Solid Waste to hold a Bag Ban Open House for businesses, direct mail, a media release, and working directly with businesses.

Thurston County Solid Waste took the lead on outreach efforts throughout the County. At this time, we do not have plans for any more public outreach, other than businesses contacting us with questions or requesting assistance. Thurston County finished a series of open houses and will send a future media release closer to the effective date.

Staff will brief the General Government Committee on the results of the public outreach program.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Approximately 30 people attended an open house for businesses on April 16, 2014. Most were concerned if their bags could still be used. If not, what would they need to get and how the pass-through charge for paper bags would work? A few business owners were concerned about the level of effort it would take to comply. Some were not supportive of the of the plastic bag ban.

Options:

None.

Financial Impact:

None.