



**Kimberley Driscoll**  
Mayor

David H. Knowlton, P.E.  
City Engineer/DPS Director

## City of Salem, Massachusetts

Engineering Department  
120 Washington Street, 4th Floor

Tel. (978) 619-5679

Fax (978) 745-0349

June 2017

Dear Business Owner,

This letter is to inform you of the requirements of a recently passed ordinance by the Salem City Council that restricts the use of disposable plastic shopping bags by all vendors. This ordinance goes into effect January 1, 2018 and will be enforced by City of Salem personnel.

**Please use this information to plan your inventory of plastic bags!**

The purpose of this ordinance is to reduce urban and marine litter and create a more environmentally sustainable community. With this ordinance, Salem joins 53 other communities in Massachusetts that have eliminated or reduced the use of plastic bags.

**A list of frequently asked questions about how your business will be affected** is included with this letter. The full text of the ordinance is available on the city website:

**[www.salem.com/sites/salemma/files/uploads/plastic\\_bag\\_ordinance.pdf](http://www.salem.com/sites/salemma/files/uploads/plastic_bag_ordinance.pdf)**

**Timing:** The ordinance will take effect on January 1, 2018 and must be observed by all commercial enterprises, including food service, year-round or seasonal, for profit or not-for-profit.

**Restricted Plastic Bags:** The ordinance prohibits the distribution of single-use, plastic check-out bags with a thickness of 4 mils thick or less, including those marked bio-degradable or compostable. The ordinance DOES NOT prohibit plastic produce bags in the produce department or at meat and fish counters, newspaper bags and dry cleaning bags.

**Paper Bags:** Paper bags can be distributed. The ordinance requires that all paper bags must be 100 percent recyclable and made with at least 40 percent post-consumer recycled material (already an industry standard). Paper bags must be labeled with this information to comply with the ordinance. A list of vendors that can provide paper bags is on the back of this letter.

For legal questions about the ordinance, contact the City of Salem Legal Dept. (978) 619-5638. For more information regarding environmental concerns, please contact Salem Sound Coastwatch at (978) 741-7900 or [info@salemsound.org](mailto:info@salemsound.org). We look forward to working with you to build a more sustainable future for Salem.

Sincerely,

David H. Knowlton, City Engineer/DPS Director

**P.S. Please remind your customers to use reusable bags. Thank you for helping to make this a smooth transition.**