



December 5, 2008

Hon. David A. Paterson
Governor of the State of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, New York 12224

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RE: Don't Dilute Recycling Efforts - Exempt New York City from
Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act

Dear Governor Paterson:

On behalf of the Women's City Club of New York (WCC), we urge you to refrain from signing into law the statewide Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act (A.17725 / S.8643) until New York City is exempt from the statewide requirements. The state bill is weaker than the law promulgated by the City of New York and would prohibit New York City from continuing its own, better program.

As you know, the WCC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has shaped public policy in many areas of contemporary concern since 1915. Today, one of our priorities addresses the need for environmental initiatives to ensure clean air, water and renewable energy. As members of the Campaign for New York's Future, we work with many other concerned New Yorkers to ensure a long-term sustainable future for our City.

New York City residents consume an estimated one billion plastic bags each year. These bags account for between four and five percent of the city's garbage; they clog our landfills and endanger our environment.

Earlier this year the New York City Council passed legislation that was signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg requiring many larger stores and store chains to accept plastic bags for recycling. This program is simple, easy for consumers to understand and most importantly, was adopted with broad support from both the business and environmental communities in the city.

The New York State Legislature subsequently adopted a statewide program, but unfortunately, the state's version is less stringent and would prohibit New York City from continuing its own, better program.

We urge you not to sign into law the Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act (A.17725/S.8643) until an agreement has been reached with the Legislature to exempt New York City from the statewide program.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Ruth E. Acker
President

Joan Freilich
Chair, Infrastructure Committee