

Ryan Knapp, Chair
Chris Smith, Vice Chair
Judit DeStefano
Chris Eide
Jordana Bloom
Jay Mattegat



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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Minutes of the Legislative Ordinance Committee Meeting

The Ordinance Committee met on Wednesday January 30th, 2019 in the Newtown Senior Center, 14 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT. Committee Chairman Ryan Knapp called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Mr. Eide, Ms. Bloom, Mr. Mattegat, Ms. DeStefano, Mr. Smith and Mr. Knapp. Also, First Selectman Rosenthal, 5 members of the public.

MINUTES:

Ms. DeStefano moved to approve the minutes of 1/16/18. Ms. Bloom seconded.
All in favor (6-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

Old Business

Review and Recommendation regarding the proposed Plastic Bag Ban Reduction Ordinance per the charge set forth by the Legislative Council on April 18th, 2018.

Ms. DeStefano lead a line by line review of the draft ordinance, which included updates to definitions such as "checkout bag" and "business point of contact."

Mr. Smith questioned if all businesses can scan bags and put them on the receipt. He also noted that "business" and "retail sales establishment" are used interchangeably.

Mr. Mattegat asked why restaurants would be exempted from charging for paper if retail stores are required to?

Ms. DeStefano discussed cross contamination with food and reusable bags, noting how existing towns deal with the issue.

Mr. Rosenthal questioned businesses how this would impact businesses that do not give itemized receipts.

Mr. Knapp suggested that even the delis which have tip paper, they still tally the items at the register and would add 10 cents as if they were adding 1.50 for a bag of chips.

Mr. Eide suggested that it could say to itemize or clearly post that there will be a fee charged.

Ms. Bloom spoke to rollout and marketing, indicating that this can be sold as a positive with the correct messaging.

Ms. DeStefano simplified enforcement.

Mr. Knapp suggested paring down the language on enforcement to only include the key part lifted from The Alarms Ordinance. He suggested when referencing agencies of the town, we use the Charter language of "Town Body"

Mr. Rosenthal said there will be a cost if this is assigned to a Town agency or department to do the administration of fines. He indicated that enforcing the plastic ban component is very clear, but enforcing the charge for paper is more complicated. He noted that businesses do not like charging for paper but some feel afraid to speak against it.

Mr. Knapp suggested that we wait to finish language before deliberating on it, noting that it is easier to include and later strike language than to add it back later.

Ms. DeStefano noted the 6-month grace period to acclimate, then as many as two additional 6 month discretionary grace periods.

Mr. Knapp will send to the Town Attorney to review. He then discussed the process from here and the two levels of voting (the committee level and the full council.)

Review and Recommendation regarding the issue of discrepancy between the Charter Revision Commission intent and the applicable State Statute regarding Board of Education candidate composition per the charge set forth by the Legislative Council on April 18th, 2018.

Mr. Eide and Mr. Rosenthal discussed how they had communicated with the Secretary of State's office and got feedback that they are fine with the ordinance if the Town Attorney had reviewed it. They would like the final ordinance filed with their office.

Mr. Knapp read the language aloud, and noted that this is good, but that we should still fix this in the Charter at the next Charter Revision.

Mr. Eide moved to send the proposed Ordinance to the Legislative Council, Ms. DeStefano seconded. Motion passes (6-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

Ms. DeStefano moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45PM, Mr. Eide seconded. All in favor (6-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Ryan W. Knapp
Ordinance Committee Chairman

Current Setup

Newtown uses a seven (7) member Board of Education with terms of a four (4) year duration, with terms expiring in alternating biennial elections. Elections alternate between three (3) seats and four (4) seats. No political party may hold more than four (4) out of seven (7) seats. In 2015, three (3) seats' terms expired; in 2017, four (4) seats' terms expired. The current board composition is four (4) Democrats and three (3) Republicans. In 2019, two (2) Democrat seats and one (1) Republican seat will be up for election. Electors should be entitled to three (3) votes and each town committee will nominate two (2) candidates. In 2021, two (2) Democrat seats and two (2) Republican seats will be up for election.

Relevant language from the Charter

§2-10(b)(2) - Board of Education: The number of members of any one political party who may serve on the Board of Education shall not exceed 4.

§2-120(b) - Membership and Terms:

- (1) The Board of Education shall consist of 7 members.
- (2) The term of office shall be 4 years.

§3-15(b) - At each regular Town Election members of the Board of Education, the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Assessment Appeals, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Police Commission shall be elected and the number to be elected shall be determined by the number of members whose terms expire on or before the December 1st after the election.

Problematic Language in Statute

The Town is currently operating under §9-204 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), shown below. This states that no elector shall vote for more than half of the number of seats up for reelection in even years and a "bare majority" of the seats in odd years. This would mean voters would have two (2) votes in years when four (4) seats expire, and two (2) votes in years when three (3) seats expire.

Sec. 9-204. Minority representation on board of education

(a) Unless otherwise provided by special act or charter provision, including the charter provisions described in subsection (b) of this section, when the number of members to be elected to the board of education for the same term at any election is even, no elector shall vote for more than half that number and when the number of members to be elected to the board of education for the same term at any election is odd, no elector shall vote for more than a bare majority of that number.

(b) Any charter which (1) provides for the election of the members of a board of education at one town election for the same term, (2) incorporates section 9-167a by reference to determine minority representation for such board of education and (3) makes no reference to the number of candidates for which an elector may vote for such board of education shall be deemed to

have set the number of candidates an elector may vote for and the number of candidates who may be endorsed by any political party at the maximum levels specified in the table contained in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 9-167a.

The best solution may be to adopt §9-204b of the CGS. The only possible problem with adoption of this section is that the maximum number of members in Newtown is not the same as the maximum dictated by §9-167a, which limits the majority to five (5) of seven (7) members. Since the Charter is more restrictive than the aforementioned statute, this may not be a problem.

Sec. 9-204b. Optional alternative system for towns with four-year terms for board of education

Notwithstanding the provisions of any general statute to the contrary, in any town which provides for four-year terms for members to be elected to the board of education and whose legislative body adopts the provisions of this section by charter or ordinance, and the number of members to be elected is odd or even, any elector may vote for all of that number and the persons receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected, except that when the number of members of any one political party who would be elected without regard to section 9-167a exceeds the maximum number as determined by said section, then only the candidates of such political party with the highest number of votes up to the limit of such maximum, shall be elected. The next highest ranking candidates, not from such political party, shall be elected, up to the number of places to be filled in such election. Each political party shall have the right to nominate as many persons as there are vacancies on the board and those names shall be placed upon the ballot.

Proposed Ordinance:

Chapter 124 - Elections

Article 1 - Board of Education Elections

§124-1 Purpose

The purpose of this article is to clarify and memorialize the processes by which Board of Education members are to be elected in the Town of Newtown, pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes.

§124-2 Adoption of Alternative Methods of Election

A. The Town of Newtown adopts section 9-204b of the Connecticut General Statutes to govern the process by which Board of Education members are to be elected.

B. The number of votes given to an elector in an election year shall be equal to the number of seats up for election in said year.

C. Each political party shall have the right to nominate as many persons as there are vacancies on the board and those names shall be placed upon the ballot.

D. If the number of candidates who would be elected exceeds the maximum number established in subdivision 2-10(b)(2) of the Charter, then only the candidates of such political party with the highest number of votes up to the limit of such maximum, shall be elected. The next highest ranking candidates, not from such political party, shall be elected, up to the number of places to be filled in each election.

13Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance
Part II: General Ordinances - Health
Chapter XXX: Reusable Checkout Bag Initiative

§ XXX-1 Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance is to improve the environment in Newtown and the health, safety, and welfare of its residents by reducing the use of plastic bags and paper bags for checkout and purchased goods and encouraging the use of reusable carryout bags.

§ XXX-2 Definitions

For the purpose of this chapter, the following terms and phrases shall have the following meanings:

Checkout bag

A carryout bag that is provided to a customer at the point of sale and used for the purpose of transporting products purchased from or provided by a retail sales establishment.

Retail sales establishment

Any retail store selling products to the public. The term "retail sales establishment" does not include sales of goods at yard sales, tag sales, and other sales by residents at their home.

Product bag

A single-use plastic or paper non-checkout bag (see exemptions, below).

Recyclable paper bag

A paper bag that should have the following characteristics:

- (1) One-hundred (100) percent recyclable overall and contains a minimum of forty (40) percent post-consumer recycled content; and
- (2) Displays the word "reusable" and "recyclable" on the outside of the bag.

Reusable checkout bag

A bag that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of cloth or other fabric, or plastic that is a minimum thickness of twelve (12) mil. Plastic reusable bags may not contain lead, cadmium, or any other toxic material that may pose a threat to public health.

Business Point of Contact

The business point of contact is the local business proprietor, manager, business owner, or owner's agent. This person shall be responsible for the retail sales establishment's compliance to this ordinance.

§ XXX-3 Restriction on the distribution of checkout bags

A. No business establishment shall provide or sell a plastic checkout bag to a consumer in the Town of Newtown.

B. No business establishment shall provide or sell a plastic checkout bag at any Town facility, Town-managed concession, Town-sponsored or Town-permitted event unless otherwise permitted by the Newtown Department or designee charged with enforcement of this ordinance.

§ XXX-4 Acceptable checkout bags

A. Any retail sales establishment engaged in retail sale is permitted to provide to customers:

(1) Reusable bags; and/or,

(2) Recyclable paper bags

(a) The retail establishment shall charge at minimum ten-cent (10 ¢) user fee per paper bag.

(b) All revenue from paper bags sold shall be retained by the retail sales establishment.

B. The charge for each paper bag sold in quantity and per bag rate shall be indicated on the customer's itemized receipt. If receipts are not routinely provided, notice of the charge shall be posted and visible from every point of sale. .

C. Nothing in this section shall preclude any establishment from making reusable checkout bags available for sale to customers or utilize recyclable paper bags as defined previously.

D. Nothing in this Ordinance shall prohibit consumers from using bags or containers, of any type, at the point of checkout that they have brought to a business establishment for the purpose of carrying away goods.

§ XXX-5 Exemptions

A. Nothing in this Ordinance shall prohibit consumers from using or establishments from making available bags as listed below:

(1) Newspaper bags, door-hanger bags, laundry dry cleaning bags,

- (2) Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste bags, yard waste bags
- (3) Bags without handles that are used by consumers inside stores to package bulk items; such as fasteners, nuts and bolts; produce, nuts, grains, candy, meat, or fish, whether packaged or not; and unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods
- (4) Bags used to carry flowers, potted plants or other items where dampness may be a problem;
- (5) Bags used to carry pharmacy prescriptions; or items that required bags to safeguard public health during the transportation of hospital waste.
- (6) Any other bags that the enforcement officer deems to not fit the definition or intent of a carryout bag

C. Restaurants and establishments offering freshly prepared foods are exempted from the requirement to charge for paper bags.

D. Gift store/boutiques shall charge a minimum ten-cent (10 ¢) user fee per gift bag do not have to meet the recyclability or other requirement of paper bags. Plastic gift bags shall not be permitted.

E. Retailers making available non-recyclable paper bags or bags that do not meet the recyclability content requirements set forth in this ordinance (for example paper bags bearing a logo) shall charge a minimum of fifteen-cent (15 ¢) per bag.

§ XXX-6 Operative Date

This ordinance shall become operative six (6) months following its effective date to allow retail establishments to dispose of their existing inventory of non-compliant checkout bags and convert to alternative packaging materials.

§ XXX-7 Enforcement

A. This ordinance shall be implemented, administered and enforced by the town of Newtown and any town department or town body designated by the First Selectman.

B. Fines

- (1) Upon being made aware of a potential violation of this ordinance, the applicable Newtown Town Department or designee shall investigate and determine whether a violation has occurred.
- (2) If the investigation confirms that a violation has occurred, then the Newtown Town Department or designee shall give written notice to the business point of contact.

- (3) The business point of contact is responsible for confirming, in writing, that the violation has ceased, to the Newtown Town Department or designee within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice.
- (4) A second violation after the fourteen-day response period of the first violation and within one year of the violation shall incur a penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100).
- (5) A third violation within one year of the second and any subsequent violations shall incur a penalty of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250).
- (6) Each occurrence of a violation after the first, and each day that such violation continues, shall constitute a separate violation and may be cited as such.
- (7) If the Town of Newtown collects no monetary penalty within a thirty (30) day period, after such penalty is issued, there shall be a twenty-five (\$25.00) a day fine for noncompliance every thirty (30) days, until such penalty is paid.

C. Notifications

- (1) Notice of a violation shall be in writing and may be served upon a business point of contact, either by delivering it personally to him or her or by posting same upon a conspicuous portion of the property and sending a copy of same by certified mail to the person to whom the notice is directed.

D. Appeals Procedure.

- (1) For any business point of contact seeking to appeal any fine or violation, the procedures set forth in the Code of the Town of Newtown § 132-10, Appeals procedure, Subsections A through E, shall apply.

§ XXX-8 Non-Compliance

In the event that compliance with the effective date of this ordinance is not feasible for a Retail Sales Establishment because of either unavailability of alternative checkout bags or economic hardship, the First Selectman may grant a waiver of not more than six (6) months upon application of the business Point of Contact. The waiver may be extended for one (1) additional six-month period upon showing of continued infeasibility as set forth above.



Ryan Knapp <knapp.newtown@gmail.com>

Don't ban the bag

1 message

Cathy Reiss <cleiss@charter.net>

Sat, Feb 2, 2019 at 12:35 PM

To: Daniel Rosenthal <daniel.rosenthal@newtown-ct.gov>, Jeff@thecapecis.com, Maureen Crick Owen <maureencrickowen@gmail.com>, CHRIS SMITH <chrissmith.newtown@gmail.com>, "CHRISTOPHER C. EIDE" <chriseide4newtown@gmail.com>, DAN WIEDEMANN <dgw0315@yahoo.com>, "DANIEL T. HONAN" <danielthonan@gmail.com>, JAY MATTEGAT <jaymattegatnewtownlc@gmail.com>, JORDANA BLOOM <jordanabloom.newtown@gmail.com>, JUDIT DeSTEFANO <juditnewtownlc@gmail.com>, KELLEY JOHNSON <kelleytjohnson@gmail.com>, "PAUL J. LUNDQUIST" <Plundquist.Newtown@gmail.com>, PHIL CARROLL <ppcarroll13@gmail.com>, ROBERT PICKARD <rpickard1013@gmail.com>, RYAN KNAPP <Knapp.Newtown@gmail.com>

Dear Newtown Board of Selectmen and Legislative Council,

I can hardly believe that I need to communicate with Newtown government officials to ask you not to ban a product/service I regularly use in town. I'm not sure who has the authority to ban such a thing (or if anyone really has such authority), so I'm sending this to many.

Yes, I regularly make use of plastic shopping bags, as do the vast majority of Newtowners. In fact, there wouldn't be such a market for these bags if people didn't find them useful.

Research and evidence demonstrate that the proposed bag ban is ill-advised, baseless, and potentially harmful.

- First of all "single-use plastic bag" is a misnomer. In my house (as in many others) we save these shopping bags and use them again and again for many purposes, including carrying dirty or wet items, and especially to line our trash cans. Others I know also use them to dispose of cat litter and dirty diapers. If we didn't have these grocery bags to reuse, Newtown residents would need to purchase their own truly single-use plastic trash bags, which are thicker and have a larger impact on the environment. This would particularly hurt lower-income Newtown residents and the disabled. (Did you see Priscilla Loewenstine's letter to the Newtown Bee editor, 11/23/18?)

- The "reusable bags" promoted by bag-ban activists can pose a health hazard, as they'd be a breeding ground for bacteria (especially if stored in the hot trunk of a car), and viruses can survive on them for weeks. ¹ Under a plastic bag ban, these reusable bags would need to carry everything--meat products, fruits and veggies, cleaning solutions, etc.—with great potential for cross-contamination. They'd need to be regularly cleaned and sanitized to prevent illness, hospitalization, and/or death due to infection from bacteria (such as E coli) and viruses (such as norovirus—stomach bug). Especially at risk would be the elderly, pregnant women, young children, and those with compromised immune systems. How many of us can/will find the time to add this bag care to our daily schedules? (According to studies, people rarely do. ²)

- Did you know that ER visits and deaths due to foodborne illness spiked in San Francisco County after their bag ban went into effect? ³ And there were similar findings in other California jurisdictions after banning bags.

- Had you heard about the soccer team who, it was proven, became infected with norovirus from a contaminated reusable bag? ⁴ Thus a healthy person can spread a virus with a contaminated bag.

- Of about a dozen types of grocery bags studied, plastic grocery bags use the fewest resources and cause the least environmental impact, while organic cotton bags are the most environmentally destructive.

- "Organic cotton bags...use 153 times as much energy as a plastic bag, and cause 606 times as much water pollution. You would have to use an organic cotton bag once a week for 11 ½ years just to break

even on water pollution.”⁵

- At the end of their useful lives, my plastic shopping bags head to the landfill cradling my family's non-recyclable trash, where, true, the bags don't readily decompose, but neither do paper bags, or anything else—the landfill is working as engineered and acts as “a mummifier.” “Also, paper bags and reusable bags take up more space and landfill volumes than the plastic bags they replace and by factor of more than 4 times as much.”⁶

- Such a ban would likely hurt Newtown businesses. While I've been shopping at the Newtown Big Y ever since they opened, if a Newtown bag ban goes into effect, I would do all my grocery shopping in Bethel.

- When I clean up Obtuse Road on Newtown's Lose the Litter Day, I easily fill multiple black trash bags. But you know what? I rarely find discarded plastic grocery bags. I do find many bottles, cans, cups, car parts, etc. Will all these be banned next?

- There are monetary costs of a bag ban, such as the ongoing purchase and cleaning of “reusable bags,” the purchase of trash bags, proposed paper bag taxes, enforcement costs, costs to current businesses in lost revenue, the potential loss of economic development due to an environment inhospitable to businesses, etc. As Connecticut residents we're already subjected to some of the highest costs of living and taxes in the nation. Why are we looking to add to that burden?

Bottom line - banning the plastic grocery bag would have negative consequences for Newtown's residents (especially the most vulnerable among us), businesses, and the environment.

Have these important questions been answered? What precisely is the problem that Newtown's shopping bags are causing? (Not just “plastic shopping bags” in general, but specifically Newtown's shopping bags, which are the only bags being considered under your jurisdiction. E.g., could a stray littered plastic bag really even reach the ocean? Or are there capture devices installed in storm drains and catch basins on the way from Newtown?) What are the measureable benefits hoped to be achieved by a ban in Newtown, and who would be responsible for tracking their achievement? But more importantly, is there another/better way to fix the defined problem besides the extreme measure of banning the plastic shopping bag?

Environmental factors and solutions are rarely black and white. It's important to gather all the facts and look at the whole picture. For example, if turns out that litter is the real concern, then perhaps rather than punishing the law-abiding, we could look for ways to better enforce our current litter laws.

Perhaps the greatest danger of a plastic bag ban lies in the precedent set—plastic bags banned today...what's tomorrow? Would we seriously consider an activist's proposal to ban the sale of meat in Newtown? It could be touted as saving countless animal lives and being advantageous to the environment, so why wouldn't we? What are the limiting factors? Don't set this dangerous precedent.

Please don't assume we use plastic bags because we don't know any better. I ask you to trust your fellow Newtown residents with our continued freedom to choose the shopping bags that are in the best interests of our families, our businesses and the environment—rather than using the force of law to remove our choices.

Let's keep it Nicer in Newtown, and please just say no to the bag-ban/tax. Facts, logic and reason would be on your side.

Sincerely,

Cathy Reiss

42 Obtuse Rd

Newtown, CT 06470

203-426-5372

- ¹ <https://fighttheplasticbagban.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/bacterial-and-viral-health-hazards-of-reusable-shopping-bags.pdf>
- ² <https://lulh.org/sites/medical-center.lomalindahealth.org/files/docs/LIVE-IT-Sinclair-Article-Cross-Contamination-Reusable-Shopping-Bags.pdf?rsource=medical-center.lomalindahealth.org/sites/medical-center.lomalindahealth.org/files/docs/LIVE-IT-Sinclair-Article-Cross-Contamination-Reusable-Shopping-Bags.pdf>
- ³ https://law.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/klick_grocery_bags_and_foodborne_illness.pdf
- ⁴ https://www.oregonlive.com/health/index.ssf/2012/05/in_a_first_oregon_scientific_s.html
- ⁵ <https://www.washingtonpolicy.org/publications/detail/should-cities-ban-organic-cotton-grocery-bags>
- ⁶ <https://fighttheplasticbagban.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/plastic-bags-in-landfill-not-a-problem.pdf>

Another document for your review:

https://reason.org/wp-content/uploads/files/california_plastic_bag_ban.pdf

- This brief shows how, “banning plastic bags is likely to result in increased use of non-renewable energy resources, increased emissions of greenhouse gases, and increased use of water. At the same time, they are unlikely to reduce litter, litter collection costs or waste management costs significantly. And they would have no discernible impact on marine animals.”



Cooking Up Plastic Soup in Long Island Sound

January 18, 2019

Microplastics are an often unseen but growing threat to the world's soil and water. The Oxford English Dictionary defines them as "Extremely small pieces of plastic debris in the environment resulting from the disposal and breakdown of consumer products and industrial waste," and many scientists specify they're pieces of plastic smaller than 5 millimeters (mm). To give you an idea of what this looks like, below are plastic pieces trawled from Sound waters off of Lordship, Stratford, on a grid where each cell is 5 mm².



In an effort to understand the scope of the microplastic problem in Long Island Sound, Soundkeeper Bill Lucey of Save the Sound requested a manta trawl through the EPA

equipment loan program in 2018. The microplastic citizen science program is in its initial stages and Save the Sound is the second group to test the equipment.

To tow the trawl, a donated aluminum boom was welded and installed on the Soundkeeper's patrol boat by Derecktor's Boat Yard in Mamaroneck, NY. (A special shout out to Derecktor's manager, Micah, for his help!)



The manta trawl is towed through the water at low speed and water passes through the opening, with plastics and other material becoming trapped in the collection end. Several volunteers assisted sorting through the algae, jellyfish, and tiny juvenile Asian shore crab to quantify the amount and type of plastics.

HOW BAD IS IT OUT THERE?

The first step to approaching any problem is to define the scope. Unfortunately, the scope of the microplastics problem in Long Island Sound appears substantial. The University of Connecticut has estimated the Sound holds 5,000 microfibers per cubic meter, and every time a manta trawl was deployed this summer it harvested various types of microplastics from the surface.

This manta trawl pilot project focused on the greater Bridgeport area, which contains several Combined Sewer Overflows, two treatment plants, and three rivers and streams bringing trash into the near coastal waters.

This table summarizes the catch from 2018. For each category, the first number represents plastic pieces less than 5mm and the second pieces larger than 5mm.

Location	Distance (km)	Date/Time	Fragment	Pellet	Line	Thin Film
Fairfield 1	3.38	7/23-1 hour	0/5	0/0	0/1	0/2
Fairfield 2	1.71	8/28-30 min	4/0	1/0	NA	NA
Lordship 1	1.76	8/24-30 min	6/1	2/0	1/1	3/5
Bridgeport 1	1.73	8/24-30 min	8/0	1/0	0/1	10/0

There are several other, scientifically rigorous initiatives looking at the issue already underway in Connecticut:

- UCONN Storrs lab works in Greenwich, CT with the Atlantic Clam Company investigating shellfish interactions with microplastics.
- UCONN Avery Point's microfiber work has spanned ten years and has found an average of 5,000 microfibers per cubic meter of water in Long Island Sound.
- Southern CT University's Breslin Lab is analyzing microplastics from Norwalk Harbor as well as effluent from sewage treatment plants and shellfish in river systems.
- US Geological Survey collected microplastics and fibers from the Connecticut River by deploying a stationary plankton net in 2017.



Dr. Breslin (Southern CT Univ.) and Dr. Hudson (Norwalk Maritime Aquarium) sampling microplastics in the Norwalk Islands this summer.

SO WHAT CAN BE DONE?!

In 2018, then-state Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr. put forth and passed legislation establishing a statewide microfiber working group. This group included researchers, industry and trade group representatives, agency staff, and environmental advocates including the Soundkeeper.

The group met twice in the fall of 2018 and there is a draft report from Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection summarizing the issue and possible solutions to microfiber pollution from clothing. We will link a copy of the report to this blogpost once it is finalized.

In the meantime, there are many other things we can all do to start eliminating the scourge of plastics on our planet.

1. Reduce or eliminate non-critical single use plastic (straws, plastic bags, unnecessary packaging)
2. Use biodegradable materials such as paper bags, straws, paper packing material
3. Put filters on washing machines to catch fibers shed from clothing
4. Recycle all plastic containers

Here is some more reading on recent efforts to deal with plastics.

Governor Cuomo's statewide efforts: [Cuomo's proposal to ban plastic bags expand NY's bottle bill](#)

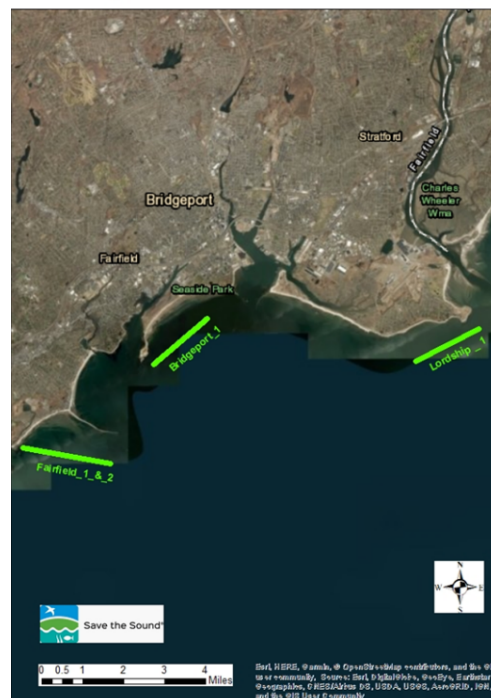
Norwalk unanimously passes its bag ban: [Norwalk votes to ban single use plastic bags](#)

How to reduce your own impact: [OceanCleanWash.org](#)

Momentum is building globally to finally take on this problem.

Thanks to all of you pushing for solutions—let's keep it up!

2018 Long Island Sound Manta Trawl Survey



Posted in [Coastal Cleanup](#), [Fridays in the Field](#), [Long Island Sound](#), [Plastics](#), [Soundkeeper](#)

Tagged [microplastics](#), [plastics](#), [Soundkeeper](#)

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GET INVOLVED

Jump in

Join the fight! Memberships start at just \$25 – support that’s badly needed now for a healthy, sustainable environment over the long term.

Join now

Take part

Thursday, January 31, 2019
Join us in Old Saybrook for a film screening of 'Blue Heart' and a discussion about river restoration in Connecticut and the Long Island Sound region.

See more

Connect with us

Stay in touch by joining our activist network email list. We'll keep you up-to-date with current initiatives, ways you can take action and volunteer opportunities.

Sign up

Take Action

- Upcoming Events
- Action Center
- Join Our Activist Network
- Volunteer
- Donate
- Become a Member

Water

- Stopping Pollution
- Measuring Water Quality
- Restoring Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat
- Living Shorelines
- Restoration Project Gallery
- Defending Drinking Water
- Current Legal Actions
- Resources: What You Can Do

Air, Climate & Energy

- CT Climate and Energy Planning
- Investing in Renewable Energy
- Greening Buildings
- Cleaning
- Transportation
- Current Legal Actions
- Resources: What You Can Do

Land

- Preserving Plum Island
- Saving the Oswegatchie Hills
- Defending Your Local Lands
- Protecting Land for Wildlife
- Current Legal Actions
- Resources: What You Can Do

Our Toolbox

- Environmental Law Advocacy
- Hands-On Restoration
- Citizen Science
- Watchdogging
- Partnering with the Public
- Environmental Justice

About Us

Advocacy Campaigns

- CT Legislative Agenda

Media Room

