



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

Office of the County Administrator, Public Affairs and Communications
1 Harrison Street SE, P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000
703-777-0113 • Fax 703-771-5841

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Media Contact: Glen Barbour, Public Affairs & Communications Officer
703-771-5086, Glen.Barbour@loudoun.gov

Loudoun County Adopts Plastic Bag Tax to Go into Effect July 1, 2022

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has approved a disposable plastic bag tax of five cents per plastic bag that will be effective July 1, 2022. The new tax will be collected on purchases made at grocery stores, convenience stores and drugstores countywide, including those within the county's incorporated towns. The measure is intended to reduce plastic pollution in the region.

“Adopting this program will provide Loudoun County with a way to reduce the environmental harm of disposable plastic bags by encouraging shoppers to reuse durable bags,” said Sterling District Supervisor and Board Vice Chair Koran T. Saines. “Plastic bags pollute our precious land and water resources. People have a choice when they shop—they can avoid the tax altogether by bringing a reusable bag to the store.”

The tax does not apply to restaurants, food banks, farmers markets or clothing stores. It also does not apply to:

- Durable plastic bags that are specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse.
- Plastic bags that are solely used to wrap, contain, or package ice cream, meat, fish, poultry, produce, unwrapped bulk food items, or perishable food items in order to avoid damage or contamination.
- Plastic bags used to carry dry cleaning or prescription drugs.
- Multiple plastic bags sold in packages and intended for use as garbage, pet waste or leaf removal bags.

Loudoun County joins other jurisdictions in the region that have adopted or are currently considering a disposable plastic bag tax. The five-cent tax became effective in Fairfax County, Arlington County and the cities of Alexandria, Fredericksburg and Roanoke on January 1, 2022. Prince William County is considering a similar tax for Fiscal Year 2023. The local governments in Northern Virginia are working together through the Northern Virginia Waste Management Board on this initiative.

[Recent updates to the Code of Virginia](#) gave localities the ability to enact a tax to address the community and environmental issues associated with disposable plastic bags, including litter, pollution and landfill and recycling center problems. Lightweight plastic bags are commonly found in waterways as litter and remain as a pollutant. Unlike natural materials, plastic never completely degrades. It breaks down over time into tiny pieces called microplastics that can end up in food and water and can harm wildlife.

Revenues generated by the tax can only be spent on programs that address litter and pollution or help low-income residents obtain durable reusable shopping bags free of charge. In addition to supporting the purchase of reusable bags for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Women, Infants, and Children Program recipients, the Loudoun County program may be used to expand existing environmental programs, including:

- Enhanced litter reduction initiatives.
- Enhanced education and outreach programs on waste reduction and recycling.
- Expansion of the county's household hazardous waste and electronics recycling programs.

The Loudoun County Department of Economic Development has begun [reaching out to local retailers to explain the scope of the disposable plastic bag tax](#) and will continue to work with local businesses to help them prepare to collect the tax beginning July 1, 2022.

More information about the tax is online at loudoun.gov/plasticbagtax.

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