



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Plastic Bag Tax in Loudoun Effective July 1, 2022

The new [disposable plastic bag tax](#) of five cents per plastic bag that was adopted by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors earlier this year is effective July 1, 2022. The measure is intended to reduce plastic pollution in the region. Shoppers may avoid the tax by bringing their own bags with them to stores.

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 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 already have adopted a disposable plastic bag tax, including Fairfax County, Arlington County and the cities of Alexandria and Fredericksburg. A [new law](#) passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2021 gives localities the ability to enact the tax to help address community and environmental issues associated with disposable plastic bags. 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 participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Women, Infants, and Children Program, Loudoun County will use the tax revenue to expand existing environmental programs, including:

- Environmental cleanup initiatives.
- Enhanced education and outreach programs designed to reduce environmental waste and to promote recycling.

- Programs that mitigate pollution and litter, such as expansion of the county's household hazardous waste and electronics recycling programs.

The Loudoun County Department of Economic Development is [working with local businesses to help them prepare to collect the tax](#) beginning July 1.

Loudoun County is making plans to distribute free reusable bags to residents later this summer.

More information about the plastic bag tax is online at loudoun.gov/BringYourOwnBag.

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