



Dear Mayor Lisa Helps and the City of Victoria Councillors,

Since our inception in 1984, the Surfrider Foundation has evolved into one of the largest non-profit grassroots organizations dedicated to the **protection of the ocean, waves and beaches through a powerful activist network**. Worldwide there are more than 250,000 supporters of Surfrider and our various programs and campaigns including a Rise Above Plastics program.

Locally, Surfrider (Vancouver Island Chapter) aims to reduce, and eventually eliminate single-use plastic check-out bags while educating the community on simple alternatives to single-use plastics. We have been working with local businesses to voluntarily eliminate plastic check-out bags. We are now asking for Victoria City Council to enact a bylaw that would eliminate these bags from being available at grocers, food retailers and convenience stores.

In the *City of Victoria Strategic Plan 2015-2018* it is clear that taking the initiative to eliminate single-use plastic bags, which pollute and obstruct local waterways (one of the biggest threats to our marine environment), fits with the following sections:

- 8: Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces and Food Systems;
- 11: Steward Water Systems and Waste Streams Responsibly;
- 13: Demonstrate Regional Leadership.

It's the right time to take leadership on this issue. Bans on plastic bags have been successfully adopted in the Pacific Northwest and in many cities all over the world. Furthermore, we have legal opinion stating that it is within the municipality's jurisdiction to enact such a bylaw.

What we are asking:

- For Victoria City Council to bring forward a bylaw which would:
 - Ban single-use plastic check-out bags at grocers, food retailers and convenience stores.
 - Place a \$0.05 fee on recycled paper bags.

For your reference, we've included the following supporting documents:

- Appendix 1 | Information about single-use plastic check-out bags
- Appendix 2 | Sample list of those cities that have successfully banned single-use plastic bags
- Appendix 3 | Legal Memo
- Appendix 4 | Draft Bylaw
- Appendix 5 | Signed petition forms containing 2,500 signatures in support of this ban
- Appendix 6 | Signed petition forms from local businesses containing 17 signatures in support of this ban

Thank you for your continued environmental stewardship. We are pleased to help City Council with all future activities related to preserving and protecting our coastal and marine environments.

Sincerely,

Surfrider Foundation, Vancouver Island Chapter

For more info contact: chair@vancouverisland.surfrider.org

Visit our website: vancouverisland.surfrider.org

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/surfridervi>

Surfrider Vancouver Island | 1



Appendix 1 | Information about single-use plastic check-out bags

What you need to know about plastic check-out bags:

- Single use plastic bags, such as those commonly used at the grocery store, make up a significant portion of marine debris.
 - Plastics now comprise one of the biggest threats to the marine environment.
- Biodegradable plastic bags are not currently a feasible alternative because of the lack of commercial composting facilities necessary to recycle them.
- Paper bags and biodegradable plastic bags arguably have less harmful impacts on the environment, but also have disadvantages.
- 2.86-billion bags used annually in Canada - 200 for every one of us.
- A single plastic bag can take anywhere from 400-1,000+ years to degrade.
- Bags remain toxic, even after they break down.

References: [5 Gyres](#), [Surfrider Foundation](#), [Globe and Mail](#), [David Suzuki Foundation](#), [Earth Resource Foundation](#).



Appendix 2 | Sample list of those cities that have successfully banned single-use plastic bags

What North America is doing:

- Across Canada, there have been a handful of cities who have banned single-use plastic bags including:
 - Huntingdon, QC;
 - Deux-Montagnes, QC;
 - [Wood Buffalo, AB](#);
 - Leaf Rapids, MB;
 - [City of Thompson](#).(Montreal, QC is currently contemplating a ban)
- In the United States, 2 states are taking the leadership on enacting state-wide bag bans:
 - Hawaii
 - California is working on statewide bag ban
 - 128 cities have already banned single-use plastic bags
- Other major U.S. cities who have banned single-use plastic bags include:
 - Los Angeles, CA
 - [San Francisco, CA](#)
 - Chicago, IL
 - [Seattle, WA](#)
 - [Portland, OR](#)
 - Austin, TX

Note: links to relevant documentation (city ordinances, bylaws, etc.) can be found when clicking on the city of interest.



Appendix 3 | Legal Memo

See file, entitled “memorandum”.



Appendix 4 | Draft Bylaw

See file, entitled “draft- bylaw”.



Appendix 5 | Signed petition forms, containing 2,500 signatures in support of this ban

1. For hard-copy ink signatures:
 - a. See file, entitled “signed-petition-forms”
2. For electronic signatures:
 - a. Online version: Refer to Change.org online petition: <https://www.change.org/p/ask-victoria-city-council-to-ban-single-use-plastic-bags>
 - b. Hard copy version: See file, “online-signatures-as-of-Oct-27”
3. For online petition comments:
 - a. See file, entitled “online-petition-as-of-Oct-27”



Appendix 6 | Signed petition forms from local businesses, containing 17 signatures in support of this ban