



Bags

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ing customers with single-use plastic carryout shopping bags, including those advertised as compostable, biodegradable, photodegradable or similar. Key elements of the ordinance include:

Single-use plastic merchandise carryout bags are banned. This includes plastic-like bags claimed to be compostable, biodegradable, photodegradable or similar.

Customers must be charged 5 cents per large

waste — particularly, plastic litter. Plastic never disappears from the environment; it can harm animals and affect the food chain, especially in waterways and oceans.

The Seattle bag ban follows similar ordinances in neighboring Edmonds (in effect since 2010) and Bellingham (approved early in 2011) where the ban on single-use plastic bags takes effect August 1. Bainbridge Island and Mukilteo have followed suit with bans effective in November 2012 and January 2013, respectively.

Plastic bag bans have also been approved by city councils in a dozen California cities, including Los Angeles last month, and Portland, Ore., a year ago.

“From our conversations with local retailers, and from what we have seen in other Washington cities that have adopted bans on throwaway plastic carryout bags, we are expecting a

smooth transition when the new law takes effect here on July 1,” said SPU program manager Dick Lilly.

“Most major stores, particularly grocery and drug stores where about 70 percent of plastic bags originate, are already selling moderately-priced reusable bags to help their customers,” Lilly added.

Shoppers can keep reusable carryout bags in their cars, backpacks or purses ready when they need them, Lilly advised. Having a reusable bag handy means buyers won’t need to pay the 5-cent fee required to get large recyclable paper bags to carry groceries or other large purchases.

Thick plastic bags — 2.25 mil or greater — are deemed reusable and may be provided with or without charge at the store’s discretion

paper bag. (Typically equivalent to large grocery bags — 882 cubic inches — with flat bottoms greater than 60 square inches.)

Large paper bags requiring the 5-cent charge must be a minimum of 40 percent post-consumer recycled fiber and the fiber content must be marked on the outside.

The 5-cent bag sale is taxable and must be shown on sales receipts. Retailers retain the revenue. Smaller bags may be provided with or without charge at the store’s discretion.

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The goal of Seattle’s ordinance is to reduce

Safety

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land.

“Rivers are dynamic systems, and they are always changing,” said Christie True, director of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. “Warm weather and cold water can be a dangerous combination, and we urge all river users to exercise a high degree of caution and awareness when recreating on any of King County’s beautiful rivers.”

“We want you to have fun and also return home safely from river recreation, so please use caution and wear a PFD on the water,” said Dr. David Fleming, Director and Health Officer for Public Health – Seattle & King County. “If you want to swim, there are much safer places to be

– visit a local pool or lifeguarded beach instead.”

Before venturing into open water, King County health and safety officials remind river users to:

- Wear a life jacket;
- Do not use alcohol and drugs which can impair your judgment in an emergency;

– Keep children within reach, always watching them closely near and in water;

– Choose safer swimming options with lifeguards present, such as a beach, lake or pool; and

– Know river conditions before getting in the water.

The County’s river safety cam-

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-- Christie True, King County Department of Natural Resources and Park

ampaign is funded by the King County Office of Risk Management’s Loss Control Fund.

For more information on river safety and drowning prevention, visit the King County river safety web page at www.kingcounty.gov/riversafety.