



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Website: www.nyc.gov/mcb12

nahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

February 9, 2016

Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker
NY City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Mark-Viverito:

Community Board 12-Manhattan passed the following resolution at our General Meeting on January 26, 2016 by a vote of 28-3-5 supporting in part Int. No. 209 as a positive step to improve New York City's environment but urging that the bill be amended as indicated below.

WHEREAS: Council Members Brad Lander and Margaret Chin, with the support of 19 other Council Members including Mark Levine and Ydanis Rodriguez, have introduced a bill, Int. No. 209, that would require retail stores, groceries and supermarkets to charge 10 cents for each single-use plastic or paper bag given to customers; and

WHEREAS: According to the Daily News, 9.37 billion disposable bags are used by New Yorkers each year, amounting to 91,000 tons of waste at a cost of \$12.5 million to the city to dispose of them; and

WHEREAS: There are 142 municipalities around the country that have instituted fees or bans on disposable bags, as well as foreign countries such as China, Ireland, South Africa and various others, and many of these places have seen a 60-95% decrease in plastic bag use, according to the bill's sponsors; and

WHEREAS: Bags that hold produce, meats and other non-pre-packaged foods purchased from supermarkets, convenience stores and delis would be exempt from the 10-cent charge; food-stamp and WIC clients would be exempt from any fees for plastic and paper, and the city would be required to distribute free reusable bags in low-income communities such as Washington Heights-Inwood so that residents can avoid paying the fee; and

WHEREAS: Plastic bags in particular are an environmental problem since, even when properly disposed of, they take an estimated 500-1,000 years to decompose in a landfill, and even then they do not biodegrade but break down into smaller pieces that cannot be absorbed by the soil

as nutrients or digested by animals, and when not properly disposed of, they end up as litter stuck in trees, clogging sewers and catch basins or floating in rivers and oceans, where they endanger marine life; and

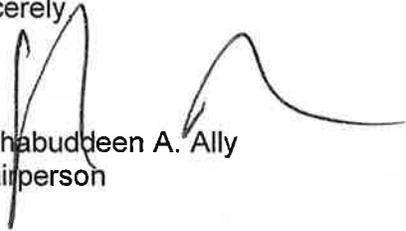
WHEREAS: Plastic bags can only be recycled in a limited number of chain stores, and the market for the plastic film material is not large enough to absorb all the plastic bag waste that New York generates, according to the City Council. Paper bags, on the other hand, are collected along with mixed paper in the city's curbside recycling program and therefore can be kept out of the waste stream so they are not as large an environmental burden; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: Community Board 12-Manhattan supports in part Int. No. 209 as a positive step to improve New York City's environment, reduce litter and save on disposal costs, but urges the City Council to pass this legislation and the Mayor to sign it into law with the following amendments:

- the fee should apply only to plastic bags and not to paper bags,
- the fee for plastic bags should not exceed five cents per bag,
- an intensive outreach and education campaign should be initiated during the three months after the law is enacted and prior to its taking effect and should be continued as long as the law remains in effect,
- the community boards as well as "private entities and local not-for-profit organizations" should be utilized in the distribution of free reusable bags in low-income communities such as ours, and
- the effectiveness of this law should be evaluated two years after it takes effect.

We look forward to your positive consideration of this resolution and would appreciate being kept informed of any future action taken by the Council in regard to Int. No. 209.

Sincerely,


Shahabuddeen A. Ally
Chairperson

c: Hon. Brad Lander, Council Member
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott Stringer, Comptroller

Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Charles B. Rangel, Congressman
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, State Senator
Hon. Bill Perkins, State Senator
Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member
Hon. Guillermo Linares, Assembly Member