

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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April 17, 2019
Start: 3:18 p.m.
Recess: 3:25 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
14th Fl.

B E F O R E: ANTONIO REYNOSO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera
Margaret S. Chin
Costa G. Constantinides
Chaim M. Deutsch
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Paul A. Vallone

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

2 [sound check] [pause] [background
3 comments/pause] [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I'm Council Member
5 Antonio Reynoso the Chair of the Sanitation
6 Committee. Today, we will be voting on an
7 Introduction sponsored by Council Members Lander,
8 Chin, Treyger and myself to enact a fee for carryout
9 paper bags. As we heard at yesterday's hearing, the
10 Department of Sanitation estimates that 10 billion-
11 again, billion with a B single use bags or some ten-
12 100 thousand tons of paper and plastic bags are used
13 and discarded in New York City per year costing the
14 city over \$12 million per year. Passing this bill
15 was a huge environmental win. Bags cause terrible
16 harm to our environment when introduced into waste
17 stream, clogging recycling machines, storm drains and
18 sewers, contaminating recyclable, recyclable
19 materials and seeping into the ocean where they
20 threaten marine life, and many of these bags are
21 ending up in landfills where they contribute to the
22 over-growing crisis of climate change. The state has
23 banned the sale of single-use plastic bags and has
24 also authorized municipalities to pass local
25 legislation requiring vendors to charge a 5 cent fee

2 for paper bags. The bill that we are passing today
3 will opt New York City in this fee. The fee is in
4 now way targeted towards raising revenue. We
5 actually don't want anyone to buy paper bags. A five
6 cent fee is merely an incentive to change behavior
7 encouraging people to bring reusable bags for their
8 shopping needs. So, to facilitate this, DSNY will be
9 handing out thousands of bags in the coming months.
10 For those that do choose to buy bags, I would urge
11 them that when they're finished with the bag that
12 they place it in the recycling. The city currently
13 only captures about 25% of all paper bags in
14 recycling meaning that the remainder are going in
15 landfill. As a city we need to take our zero waste
16 goal seriously. We cannot achieve zero waste if we
17 simply change the use of single plastic bags to
18 single use paper bags. As New Yorkers we need to
19 challenge ourselves to think long and hard about the
20 consumption habits keeping in mind that our decisions
21 have real world consequences for the future health of
22 our planet. The passage of today's bill is a crucial
23 step towards meeting the Zero Waste Goal, and I look
24 forward to this committee taking additional action

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2 this term to truly move us towards a more sustainable
3 future. With that, I want to call on the Clerk.

4 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,
5 roll call vote Committee on Sanitation and Solid
6 Waste Management. Preconsidered Introduction. Chair
7 Reynoso.

8 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: I vote aye.

9 CLERK: Chin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair
11 Reynoso for your leadership. I vote—I proudly vote
12 aye. Thank you.

13 CLERK: Constantinides.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I vote
15 aye.

16 CLERK: Deutsch.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Permission to
18 explain my vote.

19 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Absolutely.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, first, I
21 just want to say that, you know, DSNY I appreciate
22 that they're even giving out thousands of bags. We
23 have 8.6 million New Yorkers, and their thousands of
24 bags are just like a drop in the bucket, and people
25 are going to have to pay for reusable bags if they

2 need it, and then when they buy some types of foods
3 that drip in the bags, then those reusable bags
4 become—they get discarded. So, it's just an extra
5 tax even using the reusable bags, and in addition to
6 that, I just want to say for myself and for many of
7 my constituents with many New Yorkers who have large
8 families it is really a hardship to walk around with
9 dozens of reusable bags, and they're in their pocket,
10 and I tried this yesterday. I had about a dozen bags
11 in my pocket, and I looked like I was floating
12 around, and it's really—really a hardship, and yes.
13 You know, the city wants to change people's behavior.
14 There's a lot of other ways to change behavior. I
15 support the environment, but there has to be certain
16 ways that we have done in the past that we have
17 accomplished to help our environment. But this five
18 cent charge on paper bags is a—is yet another tax on
19 hardworking New Yorkers. So, although I support our
20 environment, and I think we should do everything that
21 we can, and for those that can use reusable bags, to
22 go shopping and to walk into a store to buy a few
23 items, they—they should, but for large families it's—
24 it's really almost, really almost impossible to walk
25 around with bags in your pockets. I mean I just

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2 pulled out—I have standup parties in my back, right
3 pocket. I have my cell phone in my left pocket. I
4 have my pen in my pants pocket. I have my car keys,
5 I have my wallet in my back pocket. I don't even
6 have room for reusable bags. So, with that, I have
7 to vote no, and no against the charge, another tax
8 against New Yorkers. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you.

10 CLERK: Espinal.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I vote aye.

12 CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the
13 affirmative, 1 in the negative and no abstentions,
14 the item has been adopted by the Committee.

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO: Thank you and with
16 that, we move onto the full land—to Stated tomorrow.

17 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date May 15, 2019