



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998

19 Aug 2013

State of Virginia Senators Barker, Ebbin, and Puller
Senate of Virginia / P.O. Box 396 / Richmond, VA 23218

State of Virginia Delegates Albo / Krupicka / Sickles / Surovell
Capitol Office / General Assembly Building / POX 406 / Richmond, VA 23218

State of Virginia, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors: Chair Bulova (Chair) / Supervisors Cook
/ Faust / Hudgins / McKay / Gross / Hyland / Smyth / Herrity / and Frey
12000 Government Center Parkway / Suite 530 / Fairfax, VA 22035

Dear Sir or Madam:

**Subject: MVCCA (E&R-2013-02) Enabling Legislation To Authorize Localities To
Adopt A Single Use Bag Fee**

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization of citizens' associations in the Mount Vernon Magisterial District of Fairfax County, Virginia. In 2013, MVCCA represents over 50 community, civic, and homeowner associations (and their residents) members in the Magisterial District.

Since 1969, the Mount Vernon Council has represented and promoted the interests of its member associations and advocated for the common good and the general welfare of the residents of the Mount Vernon Magisterial District. The Council takes positions on issues of concern to its members, and then presents those views to Mount Vernon and Fairfax County elected officials, and when necessary, to the Virginia General Assembly, United States Congress, and other officials or entities as appropriate. Leadership and administration is vested in three co-chairs and the Board of Directors. For more information, please visit our website www.mvcca.org.

Litter is a growing issue on waterways, parks and roads for the Mount Vernon Magisterial District and other parts of the state. Litter blights the environment, devalues property, and affects the quality of residents' lives. As part of a solution to the litter issue, MVCCA proposes an educational program and a fee-for-use of single-use shopping bags program. To do this, MVCCA proposes both Houses of the Virginia Assembly introduce and pass legislation to enable a single-use shopping bag fee of up to 5-cents *per* bag. The fee is to develop guidelines for implementation based on efficiency, cost, and ease of administration.

Subject: **MVCCA (E&R-2013-02) Enabling Legislation To Authorize Localities To Adopt A Single Use Bag Fee**

Additional background material is a letter to Supervisor Hyland "Letter to BOS-Hyland re litter prevention 2011 10 26.PDF"

On behalf of the MVCCA, this letter and copy of the resolution formulated by the MVCCA Environment and Recreation Committee and recently passed by the MVCCA General Council forwarded for your consideration.

A resolution MVCCA (E&R-2013-02) ENABLING LEGISLATION TO AUTHORIZE LOCALITIES TO ADOPT A SINGLE USE BAG FEE was voted upon by the MVCCA General Council Membership on July 24, 2013, and passed as presented here. The vote was thirteen yeas and three nay votes. As voted on, this matter before you has the support of the MVCCA's membership.

/ Christopher Low /

/ Christopher Low /
MVCCA, Co-Chair

James Davis
MVCCA, Co-Chair

Gretchen Walzl
MVCCA, Co-Chair

Cc:

Betsy Martin, Chair, Environment & Recreation

Queenie Cox, Chair, Consumer Affairs

- Attachment:
1. MVCCA (E&R-2013-02) Enabling Legislation To Authorize Localities To Adopt A Single Use Bag Fee
 2. PDF File of Citizens Action Plan for Litter Prevention Oct 2011

Attachment - 1: **MVCCA (E&R-2013-02) Enabling Legislation To Authorize Localities To Adopt A Single Use Bag Fee**

1. WHEREAS, litter is a blight that degrades property values, the environment, and the quality of residents' lives in the Mount Vernon district, and that impedes the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor and nearby neighborhoods; and
2. WHEREAS, single use plastic shopping bags are a major component of litter in local rivers and streams (e.g., nearly 50% of litter items in tributaries of the Anacostia River, according to a 2008 study¹); and
3. WHEREAS, the District of Columbia (in Jan. 2010) and Montgomery County, Maryland, (in 2012) have adopted a tax of 5 cents on single use plastic and paper shopping bags in order to reduce litter in their jurisdictions; and
4. WHEREAS, in the first year after implementation of the DC bag tax, actual plastic bag use was cut dramatically²; 75% of residents reported using fewer plastic bags; three quarters of businesses reported no impact, or a positive impact, of the bag tax on their businesses³; volunteers reported a 50% drop in bags collected during cleanups of the Anacostia River⁴; and \$2 million was raised by the City; and
5. WHEREAS, residents would benefit from education about the harm of plastic bag litter in the environment, about the value of recycling and reusing shopping bags, and about common sense actions to keep reusable bags clean; and
6. WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Taxation estimates that statewide implementation of a 5 cent bag fee would cost the Commonwealth \$125,000 in the first year and \$8,000 per year subsequently, and "could generate as much as \$26 million in revenue annually"⁵; and
7. WHEREAS, on October 26, 2011, the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations adopted a resolution in support of the *Citizens' Action Plan for Litter Prevention*, that (among 9 other actions) asks the Virginia General Assembly to adopt and the Governor to sign a law that imposes a fee on single-use plastic or paper shopping bags, or that authorizes localities to do so; and
8. WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors included as a legislative priority for 2013 (and previous years) "reducing environmental contamination from plastic and paper bags,"

¹ *Anacostia River Trash Reduction Plan*. Prepared by the Anacostia Watershed Society for the District of Columbia Department of the Environment. Dec. 2008. <http://ddoe.dc.gov/publication/anacostia-river-trash-reduction-plan>

² *Report: Bag Tax Brought in \$2 Million Last Year*. By Aaron Morrissey, DCist, 5 Jan. 2011. http://dcist.com/2011/01/report_bag_tax_brought_in_2_million.php

³ *Public Perceptions and Willingness to Address Litter in the District of Columbia*. Memorandum from Steve Raabe, OpinionWorks, to Tracy Bowen, Executive Director, Alice Ferguson Foundation. 15 Feb 2011. <http://fergusonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/AFF-DC-Research-Memo-2-15-11.pdf>

⁴ *Potomac Cleanup Collects 286,500 Pounds of Litter*, by Rona Kobell. *The Bay Journal* 30 April 2013. www.bayjournal.com/article/cleanup_potomac_cleanup_collects_286500_pounds_of_litter. *The DC Bag Fee Is Cleaning Up the Anacostia River*. Bradley Kennedy, Anacostia Watershed Society. 25 Feb. 2013. www.anacostiaaws.org/news/blog/dc-bag-fee-cleaning-anacostia-river

⁵ *2013 Fiscal Impact Statement for SB 970*. <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?131+oth+SB970F161+PDF>

Attachment - 1: **MVCCA (E&R-2013-02) Enabling Legislation To Authorize Localities To Adopt A Single Use Bag Fee**

and supported legislation to encourage the use of reusable shopping bags, consistent with the County's waste reduction goals and environmental stewardship efforts⁶;

- A. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations requests our representatives to the Virginia General Assembly to introduce and support enabling legislation which would authorize localities to impose up to a 5 cent fee on single-use shopping bags and develop guidelines for implementation based on efficiency, cost and ease of administration;
- B. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the aforesaid enabling legislation should provide that a portion of the fee should be retained by business to offset recordkeeping expenses, with a majority of the fee devoted to cleaning up and restoring the locality's rivers and streams, improving water quality, repaying the costs of implementation, educating the public, and monitoring the effectiveness of implementation;
- C. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the enabling legislation should provide consumers an incentive to bring reusable shopping bags;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MVCCA requests that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors include enabling legislation for a bag fee in the county's legislative agenda and lobby vigorously on its behalf in the next legislative session.

Reviewed and passed at the MVCCA General Council Membership meeting July 24, 2013).

⁶ *Fairfax County VA 2013 Legislative Program*, adopted 4 Dec 2012.
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/legislation/2013/2013-legislative-program.pdf