



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Environmental Advocates thank Murphy for Leadership

TERRENCE MURPHY June 8, 2016

ALBANY, NY - Just one week after the town of New Castle passed its' reusable bag ordinance, Senator Terrence Murphy took a strong stand for the environment by voting against a bill that would prohibit municipalities from regulating plastic bags. The bill was opposed by environmental groups as a usurpation of home rule. It came about following New York City's passage of a similar local law month.

"There are certainly instances where conflicting local regulations require a statewide framework, and this obviously is not one of them," Senator Murphy said "As a former local councilman it is a no-brainer to stand up for home rule and when a community wants to reduce litter, how they do so is their prerogative. Keeping pollution out of our waterways is an expensive component of local taxes and moving to reusable bags will of course save money in the long run."

Environmental Advocates of New York thanked Murphy for "his leadership on reducing plastic bag waste, and protecting communities' power to act" and the League of Conservation Voters of New York State offered Murphy "many thanks for standing up for local governments' rights to reduce pollution."

In New Castle, the bag ordinance had passed five to zero with bipartisan support. It would allow businesses to charge five cents for non-reusable, single use plastic bags to encourage

consumers to purchase reusable bags. It received near unanimous support from local merchants and even larger retailers like Whole Foods, which does not carry non-reusable plastic bags. Since the businesses retain the revenue, it is not a tax.

Steven Wolk, Chairman of the New Castle Sustainability Advisory Board, stated "The residents of New Castle recently chose to put a priority on environment, health, and local merchant profitability by passing a bag law. I am grateful to Senator Murphy for standing up to the misinformation propagated by special interests and standing with the residents and businesses of New Castle and the 40th District."

Town Supervisor Rob Greenstein stated "when New Castle passed our Reusable Bag Initiative on June 1, 2016, I stated that it takes one town and city at a time to make a difference. But, we can't make that difference if the Senate preempts our ability to set policy that protects our environment. I want to thank Senator Murphy for standing up to the plastic bag industry, protecting the rights of local governments and advocating for the rights of our constituents."

Locally, Pleasantville's bag ordinance would also have been impacted. The vote was not along party lines, and although the legislation passed, it faces an uncertain fate in the Assembly. Many New York City members have said they want to reign in Mayor Bill de Blasio, who made the reusable bag plan a signature issue. "I will hold Mayor de Blasio accountable for the corruption but I will not politics get in the way of good public policy and this is an issue that both the businesses and residents of my district have said should be decided locally," Senator Murphy added.