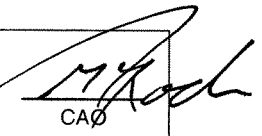


COUNCIL AGENDA/INFORMATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	Date: _____	Item # _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg. Council	Date: <u>March 23, 09</u>	Item # <u>14</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental	Date: _____	Item # _____

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DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER

750 – 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER, BC V7V 3T3

COUNCIL REPORT

Date: March 4, 2009 File: 0190-09-01
 From: Phil Bates, Manager, Engineering Services
 Subject: **Management of Single-Use/Disposable Shopping Bags**

RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. Council informs the Ministry of Environment and Metro Vancouver that the District of West Vancouver supports an Extended Producer Responsibility program for the management of disposable shopping bags; and
2. Whereas the Retail industry has voluntarily committed to a 50% reduction in the use of disposable shopping bags over the next 5 years, Council supports Metro Vancouver's education and outreach initiatives designed to encourage this goal.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the disposable shopping bag issue and to seek Council support for a provincial, Extended Producer Responsibility approach, in conjunction with regional education and outreach initiatives.

1.0 Background

"Single-use" or "disposable" shopping bags can be loosely defined as any large bag provided at the till, after which, having been used to transport purchases from the point-of-sale to your home, are then disposed without serving any other downstream purpose. Since the 1970s, these bags have been predominantly made from thin-film plastic, however they can be constructed from other materials (e.g., paper, some biodegradable material). While these bags are typically associated with the grocery sector, they are used throughout the retail industry. Disposable bags can be distinguished from more rugged bags that are purchased specifically for shopping and can be used multiple times (e.g., cloth bags).

2.0 Policy

On October 3, 2008 the Metro Vancouver Board passed several resolutions aimed at reducing the amount of disposable shopping bags being used, including a recommendation that member municipalities join forces with Metro Vancouver to seek a province-wide ban on disposable shopping bags from the Provincial Government

(Attachment A). The Metro Vancouver Board wrote to the Ministry of Environment seeking such a ban on October 20, 2008 (Attachment B).

On December 24, 2008, the Ministry of Environment replied back, indicating that the “policy of the government is to shift the responsibility for managing products at their end of life from local governments and the general taxpayer to industry and consumers” (Attachment C). This would be legally enforceable through the Province’s Recycling Regulation in the form of a Product Stewardship Program, and disposable shopping bags would fall into the category of “Packaging Materials.” However, it is likely to be some time before this program is fully implemented under this Regulation. In the interim, the Province has been working with the retail industry to reduce the use of disposable shopping bags.

3.0 Discussion

It has become widely accepted that reducing the amount of waste society produces and reusing products that we would otherwise treat as garbage are the more desirable approaches to waste. Keeping products out of the waste stream is the least cost alternative for waste, even when compared to organized recycling efforts. Moving society from disposable shopping bags to multiple use bags adheres to both the Reduce and Reuse principles.

While the Metro Board ban request underlines Metro’s resolve to address this issue, bans can be complicated by the following factors:

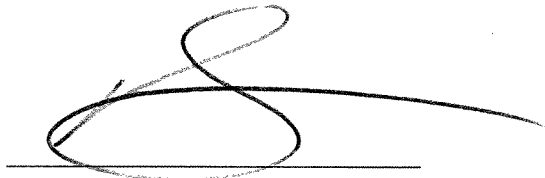
- bans are difficult to implement;
- bans can be legally challenged;
- bans can lead to public frustration and confusion, if not communicated properly.

Bans are especially problematic where alternatives are not yet publicly accepted (eg. local hardware store or pharmacy).

During 2008, when requested by the Provincial Government to address the disposable bag situation, the retail industry committed to reducing bag use by 50% over the next 5 years.

Therefore, in light of the Minister’s response to the Board and the commitment secured from the retail sector, staff are not recommending further pursuit of the ban. However, staff do recommend that the District supports the Product Stewardship approach. It is further recommended that the District continues to work with Metro Vancouver to implement education and outreach strategies to encourage waste reduction goals, such as the recent waste audits conducted at Park Royal Shopping Centre and Rockridge Secondary School.

Author:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Recommendations from the October 3, 2008 Greater Vancouver Sewerage & Drainage District Board Meeting Regarding the Management of Disposable Shopping Bags

Attachment 2: Letter from Lois E. Jackson, Chair, Metro Vancouver Board dated October 20, 2008 to the Honourable Barry Penner, Minister of Environment

Attachment 3: Letter from Barry Penner, Minister of Environment dated December 24, 2008 to Lois E. Jackson, Chair, Metro Vancouver Board

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**Recommendations from the October 3, 2008
Greater Vancouver Sewerage & Drainage District Board meeting
Regarding the Management of Disposable Shopping Bags.**

That the Board recommend that Metro Vancouver work with business associations, retailers and consumers to discourage the use of disposable shopping bags.

CARRIED

That the Board recommend that each member municipality join with Metro Vancouver to ask the Province to ban disposable shopping bags.

CARRIED

That the Board direct staff to prepare an education program together with a budget.

CARRIED

That the Board direct staff to develop a strategy for Metro Vancouver along with targets to shorten the five year time frame put forward by the delegation.

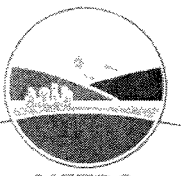
CARRIED

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**METRO
VANCOUVER**

4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5H 4E2 Tel: 604-436-6800 www.metrovancouver.org

ATTACHMENT B
Greater Vancouver Regional District
Greater Vancouver Water District
Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District
Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation

Office of the Chair
Tel. 604 432-6215 Fax 604 451-6614

October 20, 2008

File No.: CR-24-03-EPR-12

The Honourable Barry Penner
Minister of Environment
PO Box 9047, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

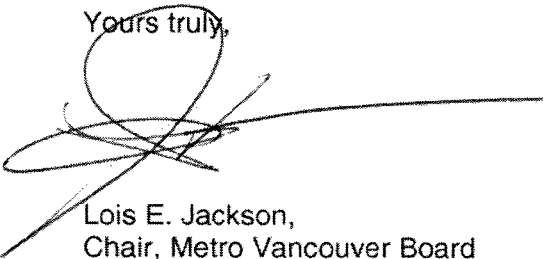
Dear Minister Penner:

On behalf of the Metro Vancouver Board, please accept this request for your Ministry to ban the use of single-use, disposable shopping bags in BC.

The Metro Vancouver Board passed resolutions on October 3rd, 2008, to address disposable shopping bags by working directly with retailers and consumers, and by requesting that the Provincial Government consider a province-wide ban. We feel that each level of government has a role to play to reduce the use of disposable shopping bags. Accordingly, Metro Vancouver will develop a new public education initiative to reduce bag use. While we are encouraged by the retail industry's recently-announced plastic bag reduction plan, Metro Vancouver's Board also supports a provincial ban to accelerate the diversion of disposable shopping bags from the waste stream.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. If you have any questions or comments you wish to consider please contact me directly or have your staff contact Andrew Marr, Senior Engineer, at 604-436-6807.

Yours truly,



Lois E. Jackson,
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board
LEJ/TA/AM

Attachment:
Metro Vancouver Board Resolution of October 3, 2008

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COPY



Reference: 101295

DEC 24 2008

Lois E. Jackson
 Chair, Metro Vancouver Board
 4330 Kingsway
 Burnaby BC V5H 4G8

Dear Ms. ~~Jackson~~ *Lois*:

Thank you for your letter of October 20, 2008 regarding the Metro Vancouver Board resolution to request that the provincial government implement a provincial ban on single-use disposable shopping bags. I apologize for the delay in responding.

The policy of the British Columbia (BC) government respecting waste management and recycling is to shift responsibility for managing products at their end of life from local governments and the general taxpayer to industry and consumers under the province's Recycling Regulation. Packaging, including disposable shopping bags, is one product category under consideration for a new provincial stewardship program. If implemented, this would create a legal obligation for industry to assume 100 percent life-cycle responsibility for packaging materials of any kind in all areas of the province.

As you note in your letter, in September of this year leading retail organizations in BC voluntarily committed to reduce the use of disposable shopping bags by half over the coming five years. They did so in response to a request from me earlier this year. They have also committed to developing reuse and recycling options to address immediate concerns regarding disposable shopping bags.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner
 Minister

pc: Mr. Andrew Marr, Senior Engineer, Metro Vancouver

GVRB	
Policy & Planning Department	
File #:	CR-24-03-EPK-12
Doc #:	CR-16-01
RECEIVED DEC 30 2008	
X-ref:	
Action:	AM
Info:	AD
Other Dept:	

Ministry of
 Environment

Office of the
 Minister

Mailing Address:
 Parliament Buildings
 Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Telephone: 250 387-1187
 Facsimile: 250 387-1356

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