

## **Disposable bag ordinance good for Fort Collins**

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Fort Collins City Council members Gerry Horak, Lisa Poppaw, Bob Overbeck, Ross Cunniff and Gino Campana should be commended for their leadership in voting for the disposable bag ordinance at first reading at the July 1 council meeting. Second reading is Aug. 19. We encourage Mayor Karen Weitkunat and Wade Troxell to join the other five to vote in favor of the ordinance.

Any controversy regarding this ordinance can be traced back to the notion that we never should have started using disposable bags in the first place. We now know that source reduction is the most effective way to reduce waste and pollutants; hindsight is always 20/20. City documents state that we use 93 percent fewer resources and produce 67 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions when we use reusable durable shopping bags instead of disposable bags.

The ordinance proposes that large grocery stores implement a 10-cent bag fee. One-half of that fee would be used to provide durable bags to the community for low-income shoppers, food banks or charities. Some communities offer "bag banks" where people can donate their extra durable bags by leaving them at city hall or grocery stores for others to pick up.

Yes, disconnecting ourselves from using disposal bags includes some complications but nothing insurmountable. We know that more than 130 cities and counties, as well as dozens of countries have regulated disposable bag usage. Fort Collins is a resilient community and with this ordinance we will certainly adjust by changing our behavior and improving our environment.

Phil Friedman, on behalf of the Fort Collins Sustainability Group