

# Citizens of Homer, Alaska Overturn Plastic Bag Ban

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## CITIZENS TAKE ACTION TO PUSH BACK ON BAG BANS AND FEES

**By Anthony van Leeuwen, 5 October 2013**

On 27 August 2012, the Homer City Council voted 4-2 to pass an ordinance to ban plastic bags. Subsequently, on September 7, 2012 Mayor James C. Hornaday vetoed the ordinance. The bag ban was intended to reduce litter and retailers are prohibited from distributing plastic carryout bags at the checkout counter. The ban excludes thicker plastic shopping bags, trash bags, bags for prescription drugs, and bags used to package bulk foods and newspaper bags. (Alaska Dispatch, 2012) Paper bags are not banned nor is there a fee on paper bags. Councilman David Lewis stated that he hoped people would bring reusable bags. One of the complaints was that plastic bags are so light they blow away at the dump. (Dubois, 2012) The council subsequently voted 4-2 to override the mayoral veto. The ordinance banned the use of plastic bags effective January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. (Alaska Pride, 2013)

A group of citizens in Homer hoped to overturn the plastic bag ban. Justin Arnold, Dan Gardner, and Marlina Hogdon filed paper work with the city clerk to circulate a petition for 90 days. They were required to get 230 signatures in order to place the issue on the ballot. Justin Arnold stated there are many reasons why he wants to overturn the ban, the main reason is to give citizens a chance to vote on the matter. Radio talk show host Chris Story also took up the band-wagon when he said the city council is not here to protect the environment but to conduct city business on behalf of city residents. He also stated that the council spends too much time “changing your behavior in alignment with a larger agenda.” The measure is on the 1 October 2013 ballot. (Klouda, 2013)

On 1 October, 2013 citizens of Homer, Alaska overturned the plastic bag ban by a vote of 54% to 44% or 661-519. (City of Homer, 2013)

Most residents who objected to the ordinance simply objected to the coercion, many of whom already use cloth bags. The sentiment expressed concerning problems with progressive politicians is their reliance upon the ban-hammer as the first weapon of choice rather than the last resort.

## About The Author

*Anthony van Leeuwen is the founder of the [Fight The Plastic Bag Ban](http://fighttheplasticbagban.com) website and writes extensively on the subject. He holds a bachelors and Master's degree in Electronics Engineering and has over 40 years of experience working in the federal government.*

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