

# Want plastic bags eliminated?

## Here's your chance to help test the idea at Portland Fred Meyer Stores

On August 1, 2010, plastic bags will be eliminated from Fred Meyer stores within the Portland city limits as a test of new statewide legislation that may take effect next year.

### How did we get here?

You may remember a time before plastic, when paper bags were the only bags you found at the store. The Northwest timber industry was thriving and many Northwest towns had kraft mills and converting plants.

#### 1965

Swedish engineer Sten Gustaf Thulin had the idea for a bag that was strong and lightweight with a high load capacity. The plastic bag was a major innovation at the time, but one with consequences as its usage and popularity grew.

#### 1970s

Extraordinary inflation in the mid and late 1970s gripped the country. Food stores scrambled to find ways to lower costs, and the plastic grocery bag seemed just the thing. Inflation or not, the Northwest in general – and especially its timber towns – did not welcome the new intruder.

#### 1980s and 1990s

The popularity of the plastic bag grew. Even in the Northwest, "Paper or Plastic?" became the most asked question. Some people loved plastic bags – you could make one trip from the car into your house with 5 bags in each hand. Plus they didn't fall apart in the rain.

Others, however, began seeing the resource questions, litter problems and disposal issues these petroleum-based bags were creating.



Fred Meyer reusable bag TV Commercial first aired in 2007

### Recently

The Reusable Bag has really begun catching on. For example since their introduction at Fred Meyer in late 2007, Reusable Bags have been used over 48 million times – a simple but effective Responsible Choice made every day by thousands of Customers like you.

### Recycling Fact

Really, recycling single-use plastic bags is easy. Last year at Fred Meyer stores alone, we recycled 641,408 tons of these plastic bags and film, most brought in by Customers to the recycling bins in our lobby.

Whether you think eliminating single-use plastic bags is a good idea or not so good, here's how to try it and let us know what you think. Your observations about shopping at Freddy's using alternatives to single-use plastic bags are welcome via email at [bagfeedback@fredmeyer.com](mailto:bagfeedback@fredmeyer.com)

#### Here's what's happening

Over the past few years, local governments have passed or tried to pass a wide array of local ordinances to curb the use of plastic bags. If they all passed, the result would be a hodgepodge of overly complex local rules, conditions and applications practically impossible for stores and restaurants to administer from city to city. What's allowed in one city may not be allowed in another city just a few miles away.

#### Last week was a good example

Portland's mayor announced a plan that covers food stores and other retailers with pharmacies but exempts home improvement, dollar stores and other plastic bag users.

#### Senator Hass decides to get involved

Senator Mark Hass (D-District 14) saw the mess that was developing and took the lead, introducing a statewide plan that helps solve the problem.

Senator Hass narrowed his focus and legislation to the conditions he identified as most critical:

- Plastic bags are an increasing component of litter in Oregon
- Oregon recyclers are being slammed with the cost of handling plastic bags
- The plastics industry isn't working on a viable solution but is instead working harder on competing with paper and reusable bags
- Without a statewide plan, Oregon could lose the war on litter



According to Senator Hass:  
*"It's important that there is a level playing field, for our citizens and the businesses that operate in Oregon. When each municipality decides to go in its own direction and make its own rules, it can make following the rules more difficult and subsequently less effective. Basically we took something that was becoming very complex and simplified it."*

#### Here's what the new legislation proposes and what you'll see at Freddy's beginning August 1

The traditional single-use plastic grocery bag will be gone from our Portland stores and replaced with paper bags.



Our Hawthorne store has already experimented with eliminating plastic bags. The response is split. Some people love the idea, others don't.

The new legislation provides for stores to offer plastic bags, but at a charge and they must be made to meet new multiple-use standards.

#### Reusable Bags are the Responsible Choice

Thousands of Fred Meyer Customers have already made the switch to Reusable Bags. They're strong, lightweight and have already eliminated millions of pounds of plastic bags from landfills.

If you haven't tried Reusable Bags yet, now's the time to begin. You'll find two convenient sizes, plus an insulated option, at your Fred Meyer.

#### Why test now?

When you come to a Fred Meyer Store, we want to make sure your experience always makes you feel welcome, important and appreciated. Any time change is introduced, it disrupts the functioning of our store and your normal shopping routine. By beginning and testing this plan now – and getting your feedback early – we can make sure we have everything right before new legislation goes into effect. It's also better to begin our efforts earlier before more local governments put more piecemeal rules in place.

#### Do you have an idea?

Now's the time to let us know not only your thoughts and observations on this effort, but also any ideas you think would have a positive long-term effect on this issue. Your feedback and ideas are welcome at [bagfeedback@fredmeyer.com](mailto:bagfeedback@fredmeyer.com)

# Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?®