

November 1, 2024

Dear Councilmembers:

I have read the text of bill 24-24 and want to make the following points:

I. Biodegradable bags exist. Currently My Organic Market stores use biodegradable produce bags that are called BioBags. I researched the manufacturer (there may be other companies that make such bags) and found that it also makes recyclable biodegradable grocery bags with handles (just like the plastic grocery bags used by stores now) in three sizes. Here are the links for each of the sizes:

[https://www.biobagworld.com/us\\_en/products/shopping-bags/shopping-bags-1?category=136&product\\_id=347&index=0](https://www.biobagworld.com/us_en/products/shopping-bags/shopping-bags-1?category=136&product_id=347&index=0)

[https://www.biobagworld.com/us\\_en/products/shopping-bags/shopping-bags-1?category=136&product\\_id=347&index=1](https://www.biobagworld.com/us_en/products/shopping-bags/shopping-bags-1?category=136&product_id=347&index=1)

[https://www.biobagworld.com/us\\_en/products/shopping-bags/shopping-bags-1?category=136&product\\_id=347&index=2](https://www.biobagworld.com/us_en/products/shopping-bags/shopping-bags-1?category=136&product_id=347&index=2)

Here is the information for the company:

BioBag Americas, Inc.  
P.O. Box 369  
Palm Harbor, FL 34682  
727-789-1646  
[info@biobagusa.com](mailto:info@biobagusa.com)

I strongly urge the Council to amend bill 24-14 to allow such bags to be offered to customers by retail stores. Maybe the county could provide some type of funding to encourage grocery and other retail stores to carry these bags. They are also recyclable.

II. I also care about the plastic bags ending up in huge piles in the ocean and across land masses. But there are many items that require plastic (or biodegradable) bags that will spoil, melt, or drip if not inserted in plastic bags. Many people like me have to carry groceries quite a distance to the bus, wait for the bus, drag them on to a hot bus, and then drag them home from the bus. I bring with me my own insulated and noninsulated bags. But inside those cloth and insulated bags one often needs to use plastic (or biodegradable) bags so that items such as ice cream don't melt or get contaminated by raw meat juices. Cloth and bags made from recyclable material do not prevent the development of cross-contamination or of food pathogens because of heat and they are very difficult to wash (they basically fall apart during washing).

III. A. I reuse many of my plastic bags for trash and recycle the rest as well as plastic wrap and packaging at various stores and locations in the county. All of that plastic wrap and packaging also pollute the world. So why not give some incentive for people to recycle the bags rather than charging a higher tax for paper bags? That tax is regressive. Saying that SNAP beneficiaries will be excluded does not account for those people living just above the SNAP ceiling and can lead to identification and harassment of SNAP customers by other customers in the line.

B. Recycled plastic bags are used to make more plastic bags as well as material used to build park benches, fences, and playground equipment, etc. Why not encourage the manufacture of those items, require county agencies to use those items, and provide incentives for private companies (owners of multifamily housing, etc.) to use them?

Sincerely,

Louise S. Erlick

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