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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Plastic Bag fee will begin on October 15

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

Plastic Bag fee will begin on October 15

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth would like to remind the public that a five-cent plastic bag fee will go into effect on October 15. On that date retailers will charge five-cents for each plastic carry out bag that will be reflected on their total bill.

The Duluth City Council passed the original bag ordinance in November of 2019. It was originally set to take effect in April of 2020, but was extended to January 1 of 2020 as a result of the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. The fee was extended again to go into effect 90 days after the state's Emergency COVID-19 declaration had expired.

The purpose of the ordinance is to reduce litter and the harmful environmental impact caused by single use carryout bags by imposing a five - cent pass through fee on carryout bags. The City Council found that single use carryout bags pollute city waterways and sewers, endanger wildlife, contributing to climate change, and cause unsightly litter. Given that plastic single use carryout bags can last for years in landfills and potentially result in harmful chemical pollution, the Council determined that it would be in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and visitors of Duluth to reduce the distribution of single use carryout bags and incentivize the use of reusable bags in the city.

The fee will not be applicable for the following situations:

- Any bag without handles used exclusively to carry produce, meats, other food items or merchandise to the point of sale inside a store or to prevent such items from coming into direct contact with other purchase items;
- Bags provided by pharmacists to contain prescription drugs;
- Bags used to transport take-out foods and prepared liquids intended for consumption away from the retail establishment;
- Newspaper bags, door-hanger bags, laundry-dry cleaning bags, bags used to protect fine art paper or bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste, or yard waste bags; or bags made out of paper.

Retail establishment in Duluth are required to post signage clearly indicating the per bag charge for carryout bags.

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