



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
AMHERST

Student Government Association  
Room 420 Student Union  
41 Campus Center Way  
Amherst, MA 01003  
(413) 545-0342

April 4, 2016

Dear Amherst Town Meeting Members,

We, the representatives of the undergraduate student body of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, address this body with regards to the current policy surrounding plastic bag usage in the Town of Amherst. Our concerns stem from a variety of issues, both environmental and economic.

Plastic bags are detrimental to our environment because they are not biodegradable, and thus pose a significant danger to wildlife ecosystems, and to future generations. They are made through the use of petroleum refinement, which adds to the amount of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Aquatic animals die as a result of ingesting plastic bags.

Plastic bags are also expensive to society. The costs may not be readily apparent but are externalized onto other parties. For instance, consumers pay for the price of plastic bags with increased product costs. Local governments, like the Town of Amherst, have increased maintenance costs due to plastic bags being littered around the town. Therefore, taxpayers of Massachusetts pay for the use of plastic bags. Furthermore, the prevalence of plastic bags increases the use of petroleum. According to BP, we have roughly 50 years left of petroleum in the world meaning that this is a scarce resource. Irresponsibly using such a scarce, strategic resource will lead to grave economic harm in the future.

We have the opportunity to limit the waste of this resource. By eliminating the use of plastic bags, we help establish a more responsible and sustainable community. Therefore, we encourage you vote to support the General Petition - "Bylaw to Prohibit Single Use Plastic Bags."

Sincerely,

The University of Massachusetts Amherst Student Government Association