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## Governor Inslee sets Oct 1 as the start date for Washington's new bag law

OLYMPIA. The environmental community applauds Governor Inslee for getting Washington's new [bag law](#) back on track. The new law, championed by Senator Mona Das (D-Kent) and Representative Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds) will go in effect on [October 1](#). As of that date, retailers in the state will no longer hand out single-use plastic bags. If customers do not bring their own reusable bags, retailers can provide paper bags or reusable thicker plastic bags for an 8-cent fee, which the retailer retains to cover the higher cost of those bags.

Washington was the 8<sup>th</sup> state to pass a bag law. It was initially slated to go into effect on January 1, 2021. Implementation of the law was delayed due to supply issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We must reduce the production and use of single-use plastic," said Giovanni Severino, Lead Policy Organizer with Latino Community Fund of Washington. "This issue affects everyone. In my community, I know that recycling and reducing plastics is a big concern."

"Bringing your own bag helps reduce plastic waste and stem the flow of plastic going into our waterways and ocean," said Nora Nickum, Ocean Policy Manager at the Seattle Aquarium. "This law reminds us all to take that easy step."

"Plastic products, including bags, directly harm marine animals that can mistake them for food or become entangled," said Sara Holzkecht, Field Representative at Oceana. "Implementing this law will help protect sea turtles, seabirds, and other marine life, as well as our communities from the harmful impacts of plastic waste."

"Plastic bags are among the most common items we find on beach cleanups," said Gus Gates at Surfrider Foundation. "This law, together with the bill passed in 2021 to ban expanded polystyrene foam products and reduce unwanted plastic food service items, will help address a chronic source of plastic pollution and help to keep Washington's iconic coastlines clean for future generations."

"Not only are these bags a cause of plastic pollution, but they also cause major problems at our recycling facilities" said Heather Trim, Executive Director of Zero Waste Washington. "They wrap around the equipment, causing the entire facility to shut down while workers spend hours cutting the bags out."

"Washingtonians are ready to put wildlife over waste," said Pam Clough, Acting Director of Environment Washington. "The implementation of Washington's bag law is an important step towards reducing harmful single-use plastics. Residents across Washington are concerned about the increasing load of plastic in our lives."

Sean Dixon, Soundkeeper and Executive Director at Puget Soundkeeper Alliance continued, "We're glad SB 5323 is back on track to reduce plastic trash in our waterways and environment. Banning products one by one, though, will not address root causes of this pollution. We need systems change if we're ever going to turn off the plastics tap, and we're looking forward to working with our partners and legislative champions to make that happen."

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### Plastics Free Washington Coalition/ Washington Sin Plástico members:

**Environment Washington** [Environment Washington](#) is a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization working for a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

**Latino Community Fund of Washington** The [Latino Community Fund](#) cultivates new leaders, supports cultural and community based non-profit organizations, and improves the quality of life for all Washingtonians.

**Oceana** [Oceana](#) is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana is rebuilding abundant and biodiverse oceans by winning science-based policies in countries that control one third of the world's wild fish catch.

**Puget Soundkeeper** [Puget Soundkeeper](#)'s mission is to protect and enhance the waters of Puget Sound for the health and restoration of our aquatic ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

**Seattle Aquarium** [Seattle Aquarium's](#) mission is Inspiring Conservation of Our Marine Environment.

**Surfrider Foundation** The [Surfrider Foundation](#) is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves and beaches, for all people, through a powerful activist network.

**Zero Waste Washington** [Zero Waste Washington](#) drives policy change for a healthy and waste-free world.