



Advocacy Department

Six Beacon Street, Suite 1025 ▲ Boston, Massachusetts 02108
tel 617.962.5187 ▲ fax 617.523.4183 ▲ email jclarke@massaudubon.org

November 15, 2016

Dear Mr. Richmond and Mr. Fischer,

I am writing to express Mass Audubon's endorsement of the effort to reduce plastic bags that you are sponsoring at Brookline Town Meeting.

Mass Audubon encourages the use of reusable shopping bags as opposed to plastic or other one-time use bags to reduce solid waste and provide for overall environmental health. US EPA statistics show that over 380 billion plastic bags are consumed in the US each year. Plastic bags are made of nonrenewable resources, and serve as a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, and marine litter. Most go to landfills, accumulate, and then do not easily decompose (it takes nearly 1000 years for a plastic bag to fully compost). Plastic bags should not be burned because they contain pollutants and toxic fluorocarbons.

These single-use bags also pose a threat to sea turtles, whales, and other marine animals that die every year from eating plastic bags they mistake for food. Because they are made from polyethylene, which is made from crude oil and natural gas, plastic bags deplete valuable and costly nonrenewable resources.

Dozens of communities in Massachusetts have passed regulations on plastic bags, and many others are currently considering joining this list. Throughout the world, more and more municipalities are living more sustainably by taking measures to curb plastic waste. Mass Audubon applauds the effort being made in Brookline to eliminate the use of single-use plastic bags and contribute to a shift away from disposable petroleum-based products.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John J. Clarke".

John J. Clarke
Director of Public Policy & Government Relations