

## **NEWS BRIEFS:**

### **Plastic Bag Ban Heads to the Governor**

Many Delaware retailers will soon be banned from distributing single-use plastic shopping bags.

[House Bill 130](#) would prohibit larger stores (at least 7,000 sq. ft.), and smaller stores with multiple locations, from issuing the bags starting January 1, 2021.

The bill cleared the Senate on a split vote of 13 to 8 on Thursday (6/6). It had earlier passed the House of Representatives, 33 to 7.

Exceptions to the pending law include bags used to carry produce, meat, fish, potted plants, and dry cleaning. Paper bags will not be impacted by the legislation.

Gov. John Carney advocated for the bill and will sign it into law.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, only three other states -- California, New York, and Hawaii -- have banned single-use plastic shopping bags.



### **New Bill Would Double Fines for Littering**

Penalties for littering would significantly increase under legislation introduced in the State House of Representatives on Wednesday (6/5).

Sponsored by [State Rep. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek Valley](#), [House Bill 179](#) calls for a first offense to be punishable with a fine of at least \$100 and up to eight hours of community service. A second offense, committed within two years, would garner a fine of \$150 and up to 25 hours of community service.

Rep. Smith said he was inspired to write the legislation after sponsoring a community clean-up event in his district earlier this spring and seeing how much litter had accumulated along roadsides and other public areas.

"It's about taking pride in our communities where we live and play," Rep. Smith said. "This bill will hold individuals to a certain standard if they violate the law."

State Rep. Kevin Hensley, R-Odessa, a co-prime sponsor of the bill, believes the measure is needed. "Without stricter penalties, we cannot expect a change in behavior," he said.

The measure has bipartisan support with State Sens. Stephanie Hansen, D-Middletown, and David Sokola, D-Newark, serving as the prime sponsors in the upper chamber.

In April, Gov. John Carney launched the statewide #KeepDELitterFree campaign. "Litter threatens our natural resources, our communities, and our economy," Gov. Carney said. "We all need to do our part to encourage Delawareans and visitors to not litter and to protect Delaware's unique natural heritage. I've heard from Delawareans across our state that raising fines for litter could make a real difference. Thank you to legislators of both parties for their partnership on this important issue."

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