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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Plastic Bag Legislation Moves Forward in New York City

Citywide environmental coalition joins forces with Council Members to provide momentum heading into election season

New York, NY (August 20, 2013) -- Citizens Committee for New York City (CCNYC), as part of a citywide coalition of nonprofits, environmental organizations, and neighborhood groups, began the push today for plastic bag legislation that would largely decrease plastic bag usage in the city's five boroughs.

On the steps of City Hall today, Council Members Lander and Chin, along with CCNYC CEO Peter H. Kostmayer urged all New Yorkers to support their legislation to be introduced this Thursday to cut plastic bag use in the city by charging a fee to most New Yorkers.

Under the proposed bill, stores must charge at least ten cents per bag (paper or plastic) provided to a customer. The bill will save taxpayers \$10 million annually in carting and recycling costs and prevent plastic bags from gumming up the city's recycling equipment and littering its neighborhoods, according to Lander and Chin.

A number of cities nationwide like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington D.C. have already adopted laws to dramatically reduce plastic bag usage.

"In the midst of a heated and contentious election season, New Yorkers, as expected, disagree on many issues, but there seems to be almost unanimous agreement among both the voters and the candidates on those steps taken by this administration and the Council to improve the urban environment and public health," said Kostmayer.

Additionally, Kostmayer, a former US Congressman (D.Pa), noted a poll in Sunday's *New York Times* in which 82% of city residents backed the smoking ban, 81% backed calorie charts, 85% approved of letter grades for restaurants, 72% supported pedestrian plazas, 64% favored bike lanes, and 73% backed the bike share program.

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“Many of these types of measures which are now widely popular were opposed in the beginning”, Kostmayer said, “but, with time and the improvement in our air and water, the cleanliness of our restaurants, the satisfaction we all get from safer more pedestrian friendly streets and most importantly the years added to New Yorker’s lives because of the smoking ban, New Yorkers have come to support them as I believe they will end up supporting a dramatic reduction in plastic bags.”

CCNYC will provide an educational opportunity for residents to learn more about the need to eliminate plastic bags from the waste stream and save city taxpayers millions of dollars annually. Community outreach meetings are currently being planned for September and October for neighborhoods in Harlem and Flatbush with environmental groups WE ACT and Sustainable Flatbush, respectively.

For a fact sheet on why reducing plastic bag waste matters and what the bill would cover, please contact Saleen Shah at sshah@citizensnyc.org or call 212-822-9566.

About Citizens Committee for New York City

What would it take to improve your neighborhood? Whether it's painting a mural, organizing a farmer's market, installing a compost bin, or launching a dance camp, we can help make your idea a reality. As one of the nation's oldest micro-funding organizations, we at Citizens Committee for New York City raise money from foundations, corporations, and individual donors—then award it to projects we believe in. But we don't stop there. We're also here to inspire new ideas, and to offer active, hands-on help. That means we're in your neighborhoods presenting workshops, meeting community leaders, even weeding the occasional garden. We're here for you, helping make your neighborhoods greener, friendlier, and more resilient. For more information, visit our website www.citizensnyc.org.