



News from Citizens Committee for New York City

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, April 1, 2019

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Citizens Committee for New York City Applauds Inclusion of Plastic Bag Ban and Congestion Pricing in State Budget

Nonprofit Led Efforts to Educate New Yorkers on Benefits of Bag Ban to Improve the Quality of Life in Neighborhoods across NYC

NEW YORK – Citizens Committee for New York City (CCNYC) is celebrating the inclusion in the FY2020 state budget a statewide ban on plastic carryout bags and the nation’s first congestion pricing plan. The nonprofit organization has long advocated for both measures to improve the quality of life and health in neighborhoods across the city, especially low-income communities most impacted by pollution, congestion and other types of environmental injustice and inequity.

“The long-awaited implementation of congestion pricing and a ban on plastic bags is great news for New Yorkers in the communities we serve. Residents will benefit from cleaner air and water, improved mass transit, safer streets and fewer vehicles traveling past their homes, schools and parks. Citizens Committee’s mission is to mobilize residents to improve their neighborhoods, and we are proud to have helped reach this milestone,” said **Peter H. Kostmayer, Chief Executive Officer of Citizens Committee for New York City.**

“After years of watching the impact of pollution and congestion on my neighbors, I am thrilled and relieved that Albany is moving ahead with the bag ban and congestion pricing. I have fought so hard alongside other residents and groups like Citizens Committee to get to this point and I am so glad our work has paid off. This is an important step towards improving the environment in every community and reversing decades of unfair policies,” said **Diana Blackwell, President of Fred Samuel Resident Association.**

CCNYC’s Board of Directors previously voted in favor of congestion pricing and a ban on single-use plastic bags, and the organization helped educate New Yorkers on the need for these policies since they were first proposed on the city level several years ago. This included distribution of thousands of reusable canvas tote bags throughout the five boroughs in partnership with local elected officials, and testifying at a City Council hearing in support of a bill to decrease single-use bag consumption in New York City alongside Diana Blackwell, President of the Fred Samuel Resident Association. Citizens Committee supports a wide range of environmentally-focused community projects, including gardens, composting, block and waterfront cleanups, plantings, air quality monitoring, workshops and more.

The congestion pricing fee applies to most vehicles entering the Manhattan Central Business District. The ban on single-use, carryout plastic bags includes several expansions and allows counties and cities to decide whether to impose a five-cent fee on paper carryout bags via local law. Exceptions to the plastic bag ban include bags used solely for uncooked meat, bulk items, food sliced to order, newspaper bags, bags sold in bulk, including food storage bags and trash bags, garment bags, and bags provided by a pharmacy to carry prescription drugs.

About Citizens Committee for New York City

Citizens Committee for New York City's mission is simple: to help New Yorkers – especially those in low-income areas – come together and improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Residents are uniquely situated to define and act on the issues affecting their communities. When provided with modest support, neighborhood and school groups can effectively mobilize grassroots efforts by offering grants, skills-building workshops and further technical support in the form of project planning assistance and an equipment share library. In 2018, we provided 523 projects with \$2.1 million in grants and services, mobilizing more than 10,460 residents in 130 different neighborhoods across the five boroughs. Since 1975, we have promoted the spirit of volunteerism, local engagement and social justice that drives our work. Visit us online at citizensnyc.org.

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