

# SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

**No. 119**

---

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### 219th LEGISLATURE

---

INTRODUCED JUNE 1, 2021

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator BOB SMITH**

**District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)**

**Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN**

**District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Designates May of each year as “Bag Up NJ Month.”

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/1/2021)**

1   **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating May of each year as “Bag Up NJ  
2       Month.”  
3  
4   **WHEREAS**, Since 1950, global annual production of plastics has  
5       increased from two million tons to over 381 million tons; and  
6   **WHEREAS**, Approximately one-third of all plastics produced are  
7       single-use plastics, which are plastics designed to be used only once  
8       and then thrown away; and  
9   **WHEREAS**, Most single-use plastics are disposed of in landfills, are  
10      incinerated, or become litter in the State’s waterways and oceans;  
11      and  
12   **WHEREAS**, Plastics released in the environment do not biodegrade, but  
13      instead break down into smaller pieces, known as microplastics,  
14      which accumulate in the natural environment and are eaten by fish  
15      and other marine life; and  
16   **WHEREAS**, Plastics have been known to cause death or reproductive  
17      failure in sea turtles, birds, and other organisms that ingest plastic;  
18      and  
19   **WHEREAS**, Single-use plastic waste creates visual pollution, degrades  
20      water quality, and impacts the tourism, fishing, and shipping  
21      industries, all of which are major contributors to the New Jersey  
22      economy; and  
23   **WHEREAS**, Single-use paper carryout bags use as much or more  
24      energy and resources to manufacture and transport as single-use  
25      plastic carryout bags and contribute to harmful air emissions; and  
26   **WHEREAS**, To address the consequences associated with the use of  
27      single-use plastic, on November 4, 2020, the State of New Jersey  
28      enacted P.L.2020, c.117 (C.13:1E-99. 126 et seq.) phasing out  
29      single-use plastic and paper bags, among other single-use products,  
30      and encouraging the use of reusable bags throughout the State; and  
31   **WHEREAS**, As a result of this new law, beginning on May 4, 2022, no  
32      store or food service business will provide or sell a single-use  
33      plastic carryout bag to a customer, and no grocery store will  
34      provide or sell a single-use paper carryout bag to a customer; and  
35   **WHEREAS**, Banning or limiting the use of single-use plastic and paper  
36      carryout bags is a significant step in the State’s efforts to reduce  
37      reliance on single-use products; and  
38   **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Clean Communities Council, the New  
39      Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the New Jersey  
40      Department of State, policymakers, environmental and business  
41      groups, as well as other stakeholders, are working together to  
42      educate consumers, businesses, and communities about the recently  
43      enacted State law and the benefits of utilizing reusable bags,  
44      however, additional education and public awareness is needed in  
45      order to create widespread change in bag use among New Jersey  
46      residents; and  
47   **WHEREAS**, The State would benefit from a month designated each  
48      year to bringing public awareness towards the use of reusable bags

1 and the importance of improving the current state of the  
2 environment; now, therefore,

3

4 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*  
5 *State of New Jersey:*

6

7 1. May of each year is designated as “Bag Up NJ Month.”

8

9 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a  
10 proclamation calling upon public officials and the citizens of New  
11 Jersey to observe “Bag Up NJ Month” with appropriate activities  
12 and programs.

13

14 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

15

16

17 STATEMENT

18

19 This joint resolution designates May of each year as “Bag Up NJ  
20 Month.”

21 Significant increases in global plastic production and a lack of  
22 proper recycling has resulted in negative environmental  
23 consequences and adverse health outcomes for fish and marine life.  
24 Single-use plastics, which are plastics designed to be used only  
25 once and then thrown away, are often disposed of in landfills, are  
26 incinerated, or become litter in the State’s waterways and oceans.  
27 Plastics released in the environment do not biodegrade, but instead  
28 break down into smaller pieces, known as microplastics, which  
29 accumulate in the natural environment and are eaten by fish and  
30 other marine life. Single use plastic waste also creates visual  
31 pollution, degrades water quality, and impacts the tourism, fishing,  
32 and shipping industries, all of which are major contributors to the  
33 New Jersey economy.

34 To address the consequences associated with the use of single-  
35 use plastic and prevent further damage from the use of single-use  
36 plastic, the State enacted P.L.2020, c.117 (C.13:1E-99.126 et seq.)  
37 phasing out single-use plastic and paper bags, among other single-  
38 use products, and encouraging the use of reusable bags throughout  
39 the State. As a result of this new law, beginning on May 4, 2022,  
40 no store or food service business will provide or sell a single-use  
41 plastic carryout bag to a customer, and no grocery store will provide  
42 or sell a single-use paper carryout bag to a customer. Although  
43 banning or limiting the use of single-use plastic and paper carryout  
44 bags is a significant step in the State’s efforts to reduce reliance on  
45 single-use products, education and public awareness is required in  
46 order to create widespread change in bag use among New Jersey  
47 residents. For this reason, this joint resolution would designate  
48 May of each year as “Bag Up NJ Month.”

1       Designating May of each year as “Bag Up NJ Month,” would  
2       allow the public to become more educated concerning the benefits  
3       of utilizing reusable bags, what options of reusable bags are  
4       available, and the importance of improving the current state of the  
5       environment. During this month, appropriate activities and  
6       programs, such as educational programs, public and media  
7       engagement, and reusable bag distribution programs, may be  
8       utilized to bring awareness to this subject and promote change in  
9       the use of carryout bags by the State’s residents.