AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

AgendaTitle:
Visitor; Office for Resource Efficiency Executive Director Kristen Van Hoesen; Initiative to Eliminate Singe-Use Plastic Bags from the Gunnison Valley

Action Requested: Discussion

Parties to the Agreement: The Office for Resource Efficiency, WSCU, The Gunnison & Crested Butte Youth Councils

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:
We would like to give a brief, informational presentation about an initiative to eliminate single use plastic bags from the Gunnison Valley. We have presented this information to the public in Gunnison and Crested Butte and would like to offer it to the Commissioners as well.

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: B. Lucero **Submitter's Email Address:** blucero@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date: Certificate of Insurance Required Yes ○ No ○

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\MBIRNIE Discharge Date: 2/21/2014

○ Consent Agenda ○ Regular Agenda ◉ Worksession Time Allotted: 15 mins

Agenda Date: 3/25/2014 Follow Up Agenda Date:

Revised April 2013

Think Outside The Bag

A community-wide initiative to eliminate single-use plastic bags from the Gunnison Valley.

The Problem with Plastic

- Approximately two billion (2,000,000,000) disposable bags are used annually in Colorado, but less than five percent (5%) are recycled.
- The average U.S. citizen uses 400 bags per year; multiply this by our local population of Gunnison (5,800) and CB (1,500) and that is over 3,000,000 bags!
- 91% of Americans have access to plastic bag recycling but less than 3% of all plastic bags are recycled.
- The recycling process is fuel, water and energy intensive and creates a product that is more expensive to make than to buy. It costs less than a penny to manufacture a plastic bag but the cleanup cost is 21 cents to the taxpayers.
- An American family will take home 1500 plastic bags a year; each bag has an average life of 12 minutes before disposal.
- 20 nations and 88 local governments have passed bans on disposable plastic bags.
- Retailers spend up to six thousand dollars a month on single-use bags, which averages 2 to 5 cents a bag, and is then carried over to the consumer.
- Plastic bags are among the items that are most often found in coastal cleanups and contribute to nearly 90% of debris in our oceans.

Who We Are

ORE
OFFICE FOR RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

WESTERN STATE COLORADO UNIVERSITY
SUSTAINABILITY ACTION COMMITTEE

U.R.E.N.
choices·reasoning·engagement·wisdom

cbyc
CRESTED BUTTE YOUTH COUNCIL

Sponsorship

Your Business Name Here!

The Vision

- Ordinances adopted by the Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte and Gunnison Councils to reduce plastic bag waste through …
  - The elimination of single-use plastic bags at grocery and retail locations.
  - Assessing a ten cent fee on paper bags.
  - Furthering the county-wide sustainability efforts and reducing the County's carbon footprint as outlined in the Energy Action Plans.

Who else is doing it?

Let's join the growing number of Colorado towns moving toward a sustainable future:

- Telluride (pop. 2,290), January 2011.
- Aspen (pop. 6,680), May 2012.
- Carbondale (pop. 6,500), May 2012.
- Boulder (pop. 100,000), July 2013.
- Breckenridge (pop. 4,500), October 2013.

20 nations and 88 local governments have passed bans on disposable plastic bags!

Embed video!

Goals & Objectives

- Provide a open forum for business and public input.
- Promote a shift away from a "use-and-toss" mentality toward a reusable, conscious culture through education and outreach; each reusable bag can eliminate hundreds (if not thousands) of plastic bags.
- Provide a free, reusable "Gunnison Valley" souvenir bag to residents and visitors.
  - Production goal of 10,000 bags.
  - Distribution locations throughout the Valley.
  - Designed by Gunnison Valley art students.
- Present proposed ordinances and petition signatures to local governments by Earth Day, April 22, 2014.

These ordinances could remove upwards of 3,000,000 plastic bags from the LOCAL landfills and environment!

Frequently Asked Questions

- **When would an ordinance go into effect?**
  - Should the Town Councils decide to adopt an ordinance, it would go into effect six months following, which would give businesses and customers a 'transition period' during which to use remaining plastic bag inventory, convert to paper, educate employees and customers and make a smooth transition from plastic bags.
- **How does the bag fee work?**
  - If adopted, all grocery and retail locations in Gunnison, Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte are required to charge 10 cents for every paper bag used at checkout. The stores retain five cents of the fee and the remaining five cents is sent to the respective municipality to address the impacts of disposable bags in our community.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What happens to the money collected for paper bags?**
  - Revenues from the fee are divided between store owners and the respective municipalities in which their business is located. Store owners will keep up to 50% of the fee collected in order to cover their costs complying with the ordinance, training employees, converting to paper from plastic, etc. All other revenues from the fee will go back into the program to provide public information about bag use and programs, to reduce the use of disposable bags, and to encourage the use of reusable bags including providing reusable bags to residents and visitors. The ten cent charge is a fee **not a tax** and cannot be used for general government operations.
- **Are some types of bags exempt from the fee?**
  - Yes. The fee is only charged on paper bags used at checkout - it does not apply to bags used inside stores such as produce bags, bulk food bags, or bags used to wrap meat or fish. It also does not apply to newspaper bags or bags provided by pharmacists, garment bags, or bags sold in packages containing multiple bags for uses such as food storage, garbage, pet waste, or yard waste.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **As a business owner how do I collect and pay fees?**
  - Fees are collected within your regular point of sale and remitted to the town monthly with your sales tax payments.
- **Can retail store owners pay the fee for the customer?**
  - No, an ordinance would prohibit store owners from paying or otherwise refunding the fee amount to customers. The intent of the bag fee ordinance is to dissuade customers from using disposable bags. If store owners pay the fee, the motivation for customers to avoid taking a disposable bag is lessened.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How can I avoid paying 10 cents?**
  - You can avoid paying the 10 cent bag fee by using your own bag that you bring with you to the store. You can also choose not to bag your purchase.
- **Why don't we just promote recycling plastic bags?**
  - 91% of Americans have access to plastic bag recycling but less than 3% of all plastic bags are recycled. The recycling process is fuel, water and energy intensive and creates a product that is more expensive to make than to buy. It costs less than a penny to manufacture a plastic bag but the cleanup cost is 21 cents to the taxpayers. Plastic bags create major problems at recycling facilities. They jam and shut down machinery, accounting for almost a third of labor costs. Plastic bags that get mixed with other recyclables also contaminate the end materials, lowering their quality and value.

Get Involved!

- Sign the petition.
- Donate/become a sponsor.
- Sign up to volunteer.
- Be an advocate – write a letter of support to your elected officials and your editor.
- “BE THE CHANGE!”

Achim Steiner, head of the UN Environmental Program, recently said "there is simply zero justification for manufacturing [plastic bags] any more, anywhere."

For More Information

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