



Washington State Senate

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Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

I am writing to respectfully request that you veto ESSB 5323, the bill that will ban single-use plastic bags in Washington. You have scheduled this bill for executive action on March 25.

Many governments in Washington and throughout the United States have recently changed their policies on an emergency basis to discourage customers from bringing reusable bags into stores during the COVID-19 pandemic because viruses can be carried on dirty bags. Indeed, as we all try to find better ways to prevent spreading disease to our neighbors, the case against banning single-use plastic bags is only growing stronger. The grocery store workers who handle people's groceries - workers who are essential under your recent proclamation - are especially vulnerable when people reuse unwashed bags.

I strongly believe that the legislature would not have passed ESSB 5323 if it had fully considered the effects of banning plastic bags during this challenging time of emergency restrictions and social distancing. To be sure, all Washingtonians should be free to use the shopping bags they prefer, but this should include the option of single-use plastic bags for those who believe they are the safer choice during the COVID-19 outbreak. I think we are learning that single-use plastic bags can be a critical tool in our fight to strengthen public health.

Please veto ESSB 5323.

Sincerely,

Senator Doug Ericksen
Ranking Member
Senate Environment Energy and Technology Committee