

DRAFT

Town Council Resolution in Support of an Amended “Plastic Waste Reduction Act”

WHEREAS, the Town of Portsmouth passed a plastic bag ban on February 26th, 2018 and became one of the 13 communities in the State of Rhode Island with a uniform and consistent plastic bag ordinance, following the initial efforts by the Town of Barrington that established a robust amended ordinance by 2015; and

WHEREAS, including the City of Providence, which is expected to pass the same ordinance on 2nd final reading on May 7, 2019, there will be nearly 500,000 residents of Rhode Island with a uniform and consistent ordinance to eliminate plastics bags that has been quantifiably documented on Aquidneck island by Clean Ocean Access in 2018 and 2019; and

WHEREAS, plastic pollution has been recognized as a global crisis, dangerous to the health of our oceans, ocean species, environment and wildlife, contributes to climate change, puts Rhode Island’s fishing industries and aquatic ecosystems at risk, human health at risk, and is the major component of litter; and

WHEREAS, the “Plastic Waste Reduction Act” (SB410 and HB5671) has been introduced in both the RI Senate and RI House of Representatives to help eliminate single-use plastic bags; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Portsmouth applauds the intent of these bills to reduce the amount of plastic pollution in our State, in our environment, in our ocean and waterways and in our single landfill; and

WHEREAS, both bills as currently written are weaker than the Town of Portsmouth ordinance and will allow for thicker, single-use plastic bags to be reintroduced into our community as well as into the 13 other Rhode Island communities that have uniform and consistent plastic bag bans.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Portsmouth Town Council will support these bills only on the condition that both bills be amended to exclude the uniformity clause, specifically the language that states that this law will supersede all local laws, which would prohibit the Town of Portsmouth from continuing to take the lead on this critical issue and would set the State on a path backwards, not forward, in its effort to reduce plastic pollution.