



October 2010

Wilton Go Green Statement
on the Issue of “Single-Use” Plastic and Paper Bags at Retail Stores

The use of petroleum and trees to manufacture disposable bags that are only used once represents an unsustainable and environmentally harmful practice that consumes limited natural resources, wastes energy and creates significant and growing amounts of pollution. This is a practice that should be discontinued.

We also believe that an informed Wilton community will agree and will support this action.

Accordingly, at the suggestion of the Board of Selectmen, Wilton Go Green will partner with the Wilton Energy Commission to propose an educational campaign and a budget to the Board of Selectmen to inform our community of the reasons to eliminate single-use bags.

An essential component of this program is that an appropriate cost must be assigned to single-use bags and charged to consumers who use them. Although the bags that our retailers now provide at check-out are free, in fact the retailer’s cost is factored into the price of the merchandise they sell, so even those who do not use the “free” bags are actually paying for them. The cost should reflect not only the product cost but also the long-term cost to the environment. We support the suggested charge of 10¢ a bag. This has been referred to as a tax. It is clearly not. We would also hope that the retailers would use a portion of this revenue to make reusable bags available at a lower cost.

The objective is to eliminate this practice. We would expect that the retailers would be able to report if the above steps have been effective. If they have not reduced use by approximately 50% after six months, we would then advocate that the Board of Selectmen exact an outright ban the use of these bags.

We understand that any change in routine can entail short-term inconvenience. But we are confident that our community will make the commitment to do the right thing to ensure that the environment we leave to our children and their children is better than the one we inherited. We believe that our community is courageous enough to think beyond personal interest and weigh the health and well being of the planet in the decisions we make.

###