



**S.4866 (SERRANO)**  
**A.7844 (KELLNER)**

## Summary

This bill would amend New York City's administrative code and the Tax Law. It would require any city with a population of more than one million people to place a five cent fee on the use of plastic carryout bags. This bill also establishes penalties for stores that violate these provisions.

## Explanation

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Americans throw away more than 100 billion plastic bags each year. Less than one percent of these bags are recycled. The proposed five cent fee on plastic bags is meant to discourage the use of plastic carryout bags and encourage the use of reusable bags. For example, Ireland imposed a 22 cent tax on such bags, which resulted in a 90 percent reduction in plastic bag waste in one year. Similar measures are being proposed in Washington D.C., Seattle and Toronto.

Legislation passed in New York State last year encourages consumers to recycle plastic bags. However, this bill would provide an incentive for consumers to use reusable bags. The production of these plastic bags requires the use of petroleum—more than 12 million barrels of oil every year. Also, these bags do not biodegrade; they break down into smaller bits that then contaminate soils and waterways, often harming birds and marine species.

This five cent fee will discourage the use of carryout plastic bags, making a significant difference in the volume of waste and pollution in New York City. However, a stronger bill would place the five cent fee on plastic carryout bags statewide.

**Environmental Advocates of New York strongly supports this bill.**

**Memo 54**