May 19, 2009

Hon. David Paterson  
Governor  
New York State  
State Capitol, Executive Chamber  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

According to the New York City Department of Sanitation, City residents throw away billions of plastic carryout bags each year. By passing a 5¢ plastic carryout bag fee, New York will follow the lead of many European countries and will become a pioneer in the United States in protecting the environment by encouraging sustainable choices. Because the fee will be collected by stores as customers pay for their purchases and will be displayed on the receipt, it will raise consumer awareness about plastic carryout bag usage and encourage the use of reusable alternatives.

We understand that the fee is expected to reduce plastic carryout bag usage by at least 10 percent. This will help reduce the number of plastic carryout bags that enter the waste stream and that litter city streets and parks.

The rationale behind the fee lies in plastic bags’ hidden costs. Plastic bags are disproportionately cheap given their deleterious environmental impact. This bag fee will make New Yorkers aware of plastic bags’ unseen costs so that they may consider whether or not they need a disposable bag at all. The plastic bag fee will promote greener, reusable alternatives to all types of disposable bags by raising the consciousness of consumers.

Last year you showed great leadership when you allowed New York City’s plastic bag recycling law to stand. Please continue your environmental leadership by supporting this bill. A plastic carryout bag fee would be an important step toward realizing our vision for a greener city.

Sincerely,

American Institute of Architects, New York  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Global Green USA  
Local Development Corporation of West Bronx  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
New York City Apollo Alliance  
New York City Audubon  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
The Point  
Urban Agenda  
Walking is Transportation  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice Inc.
Mr. Rick Bell, FAIA
Executive Director
American Institute of Architects

Mr. Glenn Phillips
Executive Director
New York City Audubon

Mr. Andy Darrell
Vice President, Living Cities Program
Environmental Defense Fund

Ms. Marcia Bystryn
Executive Director
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Mr. Matt Petersen
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Steering Committee Chair
New York City Apollo Alliance

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Executive Director
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