

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 N. Capitol St., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CONSIDERATION OF MEASURES TO GREATLY
REDUCE THE OCCURRENCE OF PLASTIC BAGS IN THE REGION'S RIVERS
AND STREAMS**

WHEREAS, the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and their many tributaries are a vital recreational resource for the region and a key contributor to the region's quality of life; and

WHEREAS, this resource is severely degraded by the many forms of trash that float on the surface and collect on the shorelines of these rivers and streams; and

WHEREAS, available data indicate that plastic carryout bags are the largest single source of trash in the Anacostia River tributaries, and one of the largest sources in the Potomac and Anacostia rivers; and

WHEREAS, plastic carryout bags create significant litter problems in the Metropolitan Washington region's streets, sewer systems, streams, and the environment;

WHEREAS, other jurisdictions worldwide have seen a dramatic decrease in disposable bag use when small fees have been implemented that encourage consumers to choose reusable shopping bags; and

WHEREAS, more than 100 political leaders in the Potomac Watershed have signed the Potomac Watershed Trash Treaty committed to a "Trash-Free Potomac by 2013"; and

WHEREAS, through Resolutions R77-07, R15-06 and R43-05, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Council) has affirmed its support for meeting the goal of a Trash Free Potomac by 2013;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:**

1. The Council supports local and regional efforts to eliminate the widespread and chronic problem of plastic bags that pollute the region's streams and rivers.
2. The Council encourages each of the signatories of the Potomac River Trash Treaty to assess the feasibility of implementing measures, both regulatory and incentive-based initiatives, to address this problem.
3. The Council directs the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee to work with appropriate COG technical committees to: survey the effectiveness of measures that have been considered and implemented elsewhere aimed at reducing the incidence of plastic bags in waterways; and compile data demonstrating the extent of the occurrence of plastic bags in waterways in the COG region. The findings of these analyses should be presented to the Council within three months of the date of this resolution.