

Adoption of Plastic Bag Ordinances in Illinois: Lessons for Municipalities Considering Legislation

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Single-use plastic bags create numerous environmental and public health challenges. To date, 543 U.S. municipalities, including five in Illinois, have passed laws designed to curb their use. We analyze the plastic bag ordinances adopted in Illinois and draw on interviews with community leaders, elected officials, and municipal employees from these five communities (Chicago, Evanston, Oak Park, Woodstock, and Edwardsville) to examine the factors driving the adoption of these local laws; why each municipality included specific features in their ordinances; what implementation challenges they have faced; and their perspectives on state-level legislation. We also presented how the proposed state bills will affect current municipal ordinances, and offer recommendations for municipalities considering plastic bag legislation.