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Proposal Argument: Maryland should institute a 5 cent tax on Plastic Bag

Plastic Bag has become an important environmental issue. In fact there are lots of suggestions about ways of curbing its usage. The issue in hand is whether Maryland should institute a 5 Cent tax on plastic bags. There are Pros and Cons in favor of any controversial issue. But everybody's got to keep in mind that they should listen and support that which is most justifiable and proposing. There are in fact some states like Toronto, Washington, etc. which has already implemented it. Among these supporting incidents, are also voices against it, like it was of no use to levy taxes on plastic bags. Yet, after going through the facts which are stated below and taking the same into consideration, very little doubt will remain as to why it should not be implemented.

Plastic bags are creating big environmental problems. Plastic bags litter the landscape, clog waterways and endanger wildlife. They take hundreds of years to decompose and recycling is also low. United States uses 100 billion out of the 1 trillion or more of the plastic bags which are used worldwide ("Plastic Grocery bags" 1). There can be no doubt that out of this 100 billion of yearly usage a considerable portion goes to Maryland. Millions of tons of plastic bags trash and pollute the oceans from the poles to the equator. According to United Nations Environment

Programme, there are 46000 plastic bags floating every square mile of the ocean (Madsen and Ritchie 8). These Plastic trashes harm the ocean ecosystems. It has been found that more than 260 marine species have been found with plastic in their stomach or tangled around their bodies. This interferes with their feeding, movement and reproduction and sometimes causes injury and death (Madsen and Ritchie 9).

It is evident from the facts which are mentioned above that plastic bags do cause lots of harm to the environment. What can be done about it in Maryland? A complete ban of the plastic will completely get rid of the problem. If such a means is available, Why not completely ban plastic bags? In such a case what's the use of levying taxes of five cent on plastic bags? Plastic bags have a utility, which cannot be provided by any other alternative. An option of Paper bags has lots of disadvantages despite the fact that it is easily degradable¹. Plastic bags are lightweight and carry heavy loads without breaking. These bags can be recycled to produce building materials and plastic bags ("Plastic Grocery Bags" 2). Moreover they are cheap and widely used. These facts suggest that banning plastic bags will not be a good alternative.

What we need to do is to reduce the use of plastic bags and give more efforts on recycling the plastic bags. One of the best ways of reducing the use of plastic bags without

¹ See Plastic Grocery Bags- challenges and opportunities Page- 1

getting rid of it totally is to levy a tax on its usage. This is going to bar the consumers from using plastic bags and force them to use another alternative. In this manner the environmental harm to Maryland due to plastic will reduce considerably.

The government's going to earn a huge amount of revenue by levying taxes on the plastic bags. If each bag adds 5 cents to the treasury of US, 10,000,000 bags going to generate 500,000\$ in revenue, which is a big amount. It can be used for recycling or for some other purposes which is going to benefit the community.

There are many things which appear that it's going to happen when taxes are levied on bags on Maryland but how can we say that it's going to work? There is evidentiary support which shows that levying taxes has done its job nicely where it was adopted. In Washington DC, after one month of a similar fee, the demand for plastic bags dropped as much as 80%. Volunteers in DC had reported that there is a significant drop in bags collected at a recent river. Businesses report about cost saving and cleaner property. Carryout bag use has declined by 90 percent since Ireland's fee was enacted in 2002. It is also incorrect that consumers are purchasing bags in bulk for household purposes as there is no data showing that ("The Bag Fee").

The department of Transportation Maryland spends \$29 per bag of litter which is collected from the state's highways. Counties spend millions of dollars per year on local pickup ("The Bag Fee"). When there is reduced litter in the streets of Maryland, it is but obvious that these costs are going to reduce considerably. If the proposed bill is passed in Maryland for 5 cent taxes on carryout bags, businesses will retain either 1 or 2 cents of the fee, which is going to depend on the carryout bag credit program for reusable bags. This will encourage businesses to adopt other alternatives to plastic bags. Many Americans report that they reuse their plastic and that taxing free bags punishes. It is a misconception that plastic bags are free. The store buys the plastic bags and adds its cost on the price of the merchandise. Besides many kinds of reusable bags exist which can be used as a substitute to those plastic bags they use now ("The Bag Fee").

After going through the above points it is a known fact that Plastic bags do cause harm to the environment as such it should be checked, 5 cents tax is a good way to keep a check upon use of plastic bags without banning it, governments going to earn huge amount of revenue by this taxation, the proposal has considerable evidentiary support to show that it's going to work and last but not the least, it's going to reduce the expenditure of the government and the citizens. A proposal which has so many positive points in favor of it— isn't it justifiable and correct to support the cause of passing legislation in favor of such proposal? It is for everyone to decide.

Works Cited

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