

WHY SUPPORT PAY BY BAG?



The Recycling Committee and others support Pay by Bag because:

- It greatly increases recycling, which is good for the environment AND our town budget.
- The more we recycle, the more money the town saves through avoided disposal costs and increased income from the sale of recyclables.
- **It's a fair way to pay for trash disposal.** You pay only for your own trash disposal *and nobody else's*.
- It treats trash disposal like a utility. The less you use, or in this case, the less you dispose of, the less you pay.
- Revenues from bag sales can be used ONLY to offset trash disposal costs and will not be deposited into the general fund.
- It gives residents control over town costs. Reducing trash is something we can ALL do something about!

VOTE YES ON ARTICLE 19!

The Hopkinton Board of Selectmen has voted to recommend this article.

The following groups and individuals endorse the Pay by Bag program:

The Hopkinton Conservation Commission
Dockham Trucking Company
Greener Hopkinton
REACH

Christine Hamm, NH State Representative
Derek Owen, NH State Representative

Imagine... that we paid for our telephone bills with our property taxes. One lump statement would arrive annually at the town offices for all the telephone use in the community. Each year, local property taxes would be collected to pay the community's phone bill, dividing the cost for service among all citizens regardless of how many phones they had and how much they used them.

For example, town taxes would pay the phone bill of the Larges, a middle-class family with two teenagers, as well as a husband and wife with a home business. The Larges might have a private number, a business phone, a dedicated fax number, an internet dial-up number and four cell phones - eight phone numbers in all - that rack up thousands of minutes and many long distance calls each month. Taxes would also cover the phone bill of Mrs. Small, an elderly widow living on Social Security who has only one landline and who rarely makes a call. If the Larges and Mrs. Small both owned homes worth \$250,000, both would pay the same tax rate for phone service.

Okay, this scenario is ridiculous, right? It could never happen, right? Wrong. Most towns in New Hampshire use exactly this system to pay for trash disposal.

(Excerpted from "With Trash, Pay as You Throw is the Way to Go" by Hillary Nelson. Concord Monitor, 2/11/06.)

See reverse side for more information about Pay by Bag. →



Pay by Bag – a SMART Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is SMART? Save-Money-And Reduce Trash (SMART) is a system by which you pay for the household trash you discard. **There is no charge for recycling.** You pay only for your own trash disposal, not that of others. Businesses will continue to pay the cost of their trash disposal just as they do now. The fundamental principle behind SMART is that people are responsible for their own trash disposal costs and that, since recycling is free, a SMART system creates a financial incentive to recycle.

Q: What are the benefits of implementing a SMART program? The benefits are twofold: economic and environmental. Trash disposal costs are rising. In 2009, Hopkinton and Webster residents sent 3,015 tons of trash to the incinerator. With a similar volume in 2010 and a rate of \$74.10 for tipping and transportation fees, Hopkinton can expect to pay \$223,412. Also, as fuel costs rise, transportation costs will undoubtedly increase as well. Recycling saves on trash disposal costs and can generate revenue, saving tax dollars. Environmentally, less waste results in less pollution. Recycling also saves valuable resources and energy, resulting in fewer greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change and threaten our environment.

Q: How does SMART provide a more equitable solution to trash disposal? Currently, the cost of solid waste disposal is paid for by local property taxes. Residents can throw away as much as they like, and the entire cost must be covered by this tax. This means that residents who throw away less trash subsidize those who throw away greater amounts of trash. There's little incentive to conserve when others in town help subsidize wasteful practices. Under SMART, these costs are covered by a per-bag payment, and **there is no fee for recycling**, so an economic incentive is provided to residents who reduce their trash volume and recycle more. Experience in other towns shows that SMART increases recycling significantly.

Q: Won't I be paying twice for trash disposal -- once through taxes and again when I buy SMART bags?
NO. The majority of waste management costs will be paid for through the sale of the bags, thus offsetting the tax burden. Proceeds from bag sales will go to support only waste management and will not become part of the general fund. Any waste management expenses not covered by bag revenues will be covered by general taxation.

Q: Why shouldn't I get as many free services as possible from the Town? Town services are never 'free' - you pay for them through your property tax. The idea that trash disposal is 'free' is an illusion resulting from the fact that disposal costs are incorporated in the tax bill. SMART is merely a shift in the way we pay for trash disposal. **It is NOT an added fee. Revenue from bag sales will go into a special account to offset the taxes currently paid for trash disposal.** One reason SMART works is that it makes it clear to everybody that trash disposal costs money.

Q: Since all taxpayers subsidize schools whether or not they have children in the schools, why shouldn't all taxpayers subsidize trash collection even if they aren't generating much trash? Most taxpayers are willing to subsidize education because they feel that it's in the public interest. Generating more trash is not in the public interest -- quite the opposite.

Q: How much will the bags cost? Prices, estimated based on current costs, will be \$1.25 per 33-gallon bag and .75 cents per 13-gallon bag.

Q: Won't SMART impose an unfair burden on low-income residents? No. Low-income residents will also share in the overall savings achieved by SMART, and because it restores some measure of individual control over the trash bill, households that need to economize are given the option to do so. On balance, SMART is advantageous to low-income households. Additionally, subsidies will be made available through the Human Services Department. Low-income families who qualify for assistance will be provided with a certain number of bags at no charge or for a reduced fee. Generally, this number would be based on the average number used by a family of the same size that recycles.

Q: Will SMART benefit senior citizens? Since senior citizens tend to have very modest trash output, they are currently subsidizing other households. The great majority of senior citizens will see their trash disposal expenses go down with SMART, since they'll come closer to paying only for the limited services they require.

Q: Will SMART result in problems with illegal dumping? Experience has shown that any increase in illegal dumping is negligible and short-lived, if it occurs at all. Enforcement of littering laws will address any issues.

Q: How will large items like refrigerators, TVs and furniture be handled under SMART? These and other bulky items, along with building materials and hazardous waste, will be handled the same way as they are now. TV sets, computers and other electronic items are currently recycled.

Q: Do people in other communities like Pay by Bag/SMART? In every community where SMART is proposed, there are residents who are certain they won't like the program. But once residents see the program in action, it receives strong support from a majority of people, largely because of its cost savings and inherent fairness. **None of the 47 communities in New Hampshire have ever voted to rescind SMART.**

For a complete list of FAQs, visit the Hopkinton town website at: www.hopkinton-nh.gov.

This document provided courtesy of the Hopkinton Recycling Committee.