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Dear Ms. Murphy:

I am writing to you as a representative of Giant Food and as someone who has served on the board of the Capital Area Food Bank for almost 30 years. There is an issue before the DC City Council that is scheduled for a public hearing on April 1st which will have a direct, negative financial burden on the poor and needy citizens of the city. These are the people that your organization serves. I am asking you to contact the Mayor and city council members as soon as possible to oppose this legislation. Please permit me to elaborate!

City Councilman Tommy Wells has introduced legislation that will mandate a 5 cents per bag fee (or tax) that must be paid by every shopper for each plastic or paper bag that is used at retail food stores to carry groceries home!!! Bags that you traditionally get for free will cost shoppers 5 cents each!! This legislation will impact everyone but will have a significant impact upon low income shoppers, the elderly, food stamp recipients, Womens, Infants & Children (WIC) recipients, and handicapped shoppers. Many of these people walk to food stores or use public transportation. Often they need multiple bags to hold their purchases, and ask clerks to "double bag" their purchases, so that they may go home without fear of broken or torn bags. These are the people who can least afford to pay more! If shoppers have two bags of groceries and ask for "double bags", they will pay 20 cents for their four bags! With food costs increasing, no one can afford to pay an extra 5 cents per bag...especially the poor and needy.

Councilman Wells' objective is to get more people to use "reusable" bags and thus eliminate litter. The money that the fee or tax will generate will be used to clean up the Anacostia River! While Councilman Wells' objective is most noteworthy, there are other ways that his objectives can be met WITHOUT ASKING EVERY SHOPPER TO PAY AN ADDITIONAL 5 CENTS PER BAG. If you go food shopping two or three times a week, imagine how much extra this will cost consumers over a year?

If you think Councilman Wells' legislation is a step in the wrong direction for those citizens who are struggling financially, it is important that you call, write, or e-mail our elected officials BEFORE APRIL 1st. It is suggested that you write to the Mayor and then send copies of your letter to every member of the City Council! Enclosed you will find additional information about this issue as well as a list of city council members.

Thank you for your efforts to "bag" this proposed legislation! The clients your agency serves surely do not want to pay for bags but would rather put more food on their tables without this ill-conceived fee or tax! Please take action now to let the Mayor and Council members know how you feel about Councilman Wells' proposed legislation.

Sincerely,



Barry F. Scher

Enclosures