



TOM CILMI
Suffolk County Legislator
10th District

For Immediate Release

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With the ink barely dry on a proposal to ban the use of single use bags in Suffolk County, Republican Legislator Tom Cilmi, a former business owner, chamber of commerce president and self-proclaimed defender of small business issued the following statement in opposition.

"While I am as concerned as anyone with our environment and with litter in our communities, the outright ban on so-called single use plastic bags proposed by Legislator Spencer is wrong on many levels.

In the first place, this is a back door tax on business and ultimately on consumers. Here in New York, businesses already face a tax and regulatory environment which is nothing short of oppressive. That translates into less competition, fewer jobs and higher prices for consumers, none of which is good for our fragile economy. This adds to that burden forcing retailers to sell alternative bags at a prescribed cost.

Second, there is no guarantee that replacement bags will be any less harmful to our environment. It won't be long before thicker plastic bags, which have not been banned, cloth bags and paper bags take the place of banned bags polluting our neighborhoods.

I would much prefer an incentive-based program whereby, for example, consumers and retailers would receive sales tax reductions for using reusable bags. That would encourage environmental stewardship without adding to consumer prices.

Simply put, this proposal would be yet another government imposed financial burden on consumers and businesses which they cannot afford, with questionable net environmental benefit. It should be decisively defeated."