Answers to several key questions

Who is covered by the bylaws? Anyone who provides goods – including food and/or beverages – directly to consumers, with or without charge. This includes sporadic (even single-event), temporary, part- or full-time operations that are commercial, non-profit, religious, educational, foundation-related, or governmental, regardless of where they are.

What kinds of bags might I get when I go shopping? Bringing your own bags is best. At check-out, establishments will have the option of providing (possibly for a price) recyclable paper bags, cardboard boxes, and/or reusable shopping bags that should be large, strong, thick, washable, and made of natural fibers (such as cotton or linen) or a durable, non-toxic, food-grade plastic. For bulk items, you'll get either paper bags or compostable plastic bags.

Do the bylaws get rid of all plastic bags? No. There will still be bags for newspapers, dry cleaning, and many products. And you'll be able to purchase packaged plastic bags as you might do now.

What will take the place of polystyrene containers? Options range from traditional materials like cardboard and aluminum foil to newer, compostable ones made from natural fibers like straw, corn, or sugar cane residue. And, while not covered by the bylaws, in many cases you'll be able to bring your own drink or food containers.

If you have questions, please contact us.

Tri-Town Health Department

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Lee Greener Gateway Committee

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TIPS FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION

- **Obtain a few reusable bags.**
- **Get in the habit of bringing the bags when you shop.**
- **When shopping, ask for a bag only if you need one.**
- **Try options to the thin-film bags around the house.**
- **Bring reusable containers with you when drinking or eating out.**

3/24/17

TRITOWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Lee + Lenox + Stockbridge

and the

Lee Greener Gateway Committee*

AS OF MAY 12, 2017

A CONSUMERS' GUIDE TO THE PLASTIC BAG AND POLYSTYRENE BYLAWS

**Formerly the Lee Recycling Committee*

SUMMARY OF THE PLASTIC BAG AND POLYSTYRENE BYLAWS ADOPTED AT THE 2016 TOWN MEETING

- No more free, thin-film shopping bags and no more polystyrene drink and food containers.
- For long-term savings, to help Lee be greener and cleaner, and to support local establishments, **please use only reusable bags and containers**. You can start now: supermarkets sell reusable bags, a few banks give them away, and several downtown merchants (Carr Hardware, Karen Keenan's, Lee Hardware, Paperdilly, and Zabian's) and the Outlets sell the Committee's bags.

Visit: www.tritownhealth.org and www.lee.ma.us/recycling-greener-gateway-committee for the bylaws, options for replacing plastic bags around the house, tips for the safe and long use of reusable bags, FAQs, and more.

The May 2016 Town Meeting adopted bylaws regulating the use of thin-film, plastic shopping bags and polystyrene drink and food containers. The goal was to reduce adverse impacts and to make Lee more sustainable and attractive to residents, tourists, and businesses. The bylaws require those providing food, drinks, and goods that have not already stopped using the regulated items to use different products. The key provisions for consumers are summarized below.

Thin-Film Plastic Shopping Bags	Polystyrene Drink and Food Containers
Regulations • Consumers may use whatever bags or other containers they want. • At checkout, Establishments may provide, with or without charge, only reusable shopping bags, recyclable paper bags (defined in the bylaw), or cardboard boxes. • Establishments may not provide any bags made of polyethylene. • Raw food and bulk item bags must be made of compostable bioplastics, cellophane, wax paper, or recyclable paper.	**Regulations** • Consumers may use their own containers. • Food establishments – broadly defined – cannot use or provide food and drink containers made of foam or rigid polystyrene.
Exemptions • Participants in the WIC or SNAP programs and non-profits or charities that distribute goods to clients do not have to pay for recyclable paper bags or, at the establishment's discretion, reusable bags. • Non-profits and charities that distribute goods to clients are exempt. • Consumers may purchase plastic bags contained in packages of multiple units intended for personal use.	**Exemptions** • Consumers may purchase pre-packaged food and drink containers made of polystyrene for their personal use. • Food or drinks prepared or packaged outside of Lee are exempt.
Enforcement: consumers may file with the Tri-Town Health Department complaints of non-compliance by establishments.	**Enforcement:** consumers may file complaints of non-compliance by establishments with the Tri-Town Health Department.