

Key things to know about Montreal's possible plastic bag ban

 www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-plastic-bag-details-1.3356917

If the city follows through on recommendations made by its environmental committee, Montreal could become the first metropolis in Canada to ban plastic bags.

- [Montreal urged to ban plastic bags by 2018](#)
- [Montreal merchants say no to banning plastic bags](#)

Here are some key things to know, based on the committee's recommendations and what's happened in other cities.

What a ban would do



Use of plastic bags dropped by more than half in Quebec between 2007 and 2010. (CBC)

The committee recommended the city ban the use of plastic bags by Earth Day in 2018 in favour of reusable or recyclable bags.

The committee suggested the city work with the Quebec government to establish industrial norms to ensure new bags are recyclable.

It recommended exceptions be made for hygienic bags used to handle certain foods, carry medication and dry cleaning.

Next steps



Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre came out in favour of a ban last year. (Kathy Willens/Associated Press)

Montreal would need to adopt the recommendations and introduce a bylaw.

The idea to ban single-use plastic bags was first put forward by Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre a year ago. At the time, he said he was in favour of them.

"Personally, I think we should ban them...but we have to consult properly so that all players in society can contribute fully," Coderre said.

The case for a ban



Plastics are polluting the world's oceans at an alarming rate, researchers say. (Timothy Townsend/University of California-Santa Barbara)

Environmental groups say plastic bags have been a vexing source of pollution. Because they don't easily decompose, they end up littering parks, rivers, beaches and oceans.

Plastic debris can accumulate in the ocean and ends up in the bellies of fish and other marine life, environmentalists say.

The use of plastic bags has fallen dramatically in Quebec due to public awareness campaigns as well as a five-cent charge brought in by retailers.

Plastic bag use in Quebec dropped from 2.2 billion in 2007 to around 1 billion in 2010, according to Recyc-Québec.

Business group opposed



At the moment, grocery stores in Quebec such as Metro charge five cents for plastic bags. (THE CANADIAN PRESS)

The recommendations for Montreal were criticized by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which represents small and mid-sized companies.

The group said a ban could cause consumers to buy less or nothing at all if they don't happen to have a bag on them.

However, one local store manager says she isn't worried.

Lucy De Santis of Supermarché PA said many customers have already made the switch.

"We use a lot more of our own reusable bags that people have a habit of buying and constantly reusing," she said.

Who else bans bags



California became the first American state to introduce a ban in 2014. (The Associated Press)

Plastic bags are already banned in some smaller Quebec municipalities, namely Huntingdon and Deux-Montagnes.

In Canada, Leaf Rapids, Man., became the first municipality to prohibit single-use plastic shopping bags.

In the United States, momentum has been picking up in recent years for plastic bag bans in coastal communities and large cities across the U.S, including Chicago, Los Angeles, Austin and Seattle.

On Wednesday, the mayor took to Twitter to ask whether the city should go ahead with a plastic bag ban.