



Saturday, May 6, 2023 - NJDEP Update:

May 4th marked the first anniversary since New Jersey implemented the law restricting single-use plastic bags! In this week's NJDEP Update read about the progress we've made since the single-use plastic bag ban took effect, DEP's **Guard Your Backyard** initiative to protect residents from receiving unclean soil and guard against illegal dumping, a **new Tier A MS4 Stormwater Permit requirement**, multiple **training opportunities for local officials** and more.

Murphy Administration Marks First Anniversary of Law Limiting Single-Use Plastic In New Jersey

One year after New Jersey implemented a law restricting single-use plastic bags and straws, and limited use of other products including paper carryout bags and polystyrene foam food containers, the Murphy Administration is celebrating a significant decrease in the use of these products and resulting reductions in litter, Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette announced.

Governor Murphy signed the [law](#) in 2020 and New Jersey implemented it effective May 4, 2022. The law prevents grocery stores retail establishments from providing single-use plastic bags to customers, and further restricts grocery stores 2,500 square feet or larger from providing single-use paper bags. Similarly, polystyrene foam food takeout containers and other polystyrene food service products also may no longer be provided to customers, and single-use plastic straws may only be provided upon a customer's request.

The impact of these restrictions is being hailed as a success just one year after the law went into effect.

"New Jersey's initiative to step up and say no to continued plastics pollution in our communities and waterways is worthy of celebration because we have quickly seen the positive effects of this law," **Commissioner LaTourette said**. "Removing single-use plastics, paper bags and foam food containers from our waste stream keeps our communities clean and protects aquatic and marine life as well as wildlife. Our next steps will be to continue educating the public about how and why these restrictions have a lasting difference on environmental protection."

“The reduction in the use of single-use plastics puts New Jersey at the forefront of efforts to protect our environment and builds on our commitment to public health through action,” **said New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. “Microplastics have the potential of causing cancer and other negative health effects on people. That’s a steep price to pay. Reducing plastics and microplastics leads to healthier New Jerseyans and a more sustainable future.”

Among key metrics measured during the past year:

- The [New Jersey Food Council](#) estimates that 5.5 billion single-use plastic bags and 110 million single-use paper bags were eliminated from entering the waste stream and environment by its 2,000 grocery store members between May and December 2022;
- There has been a more than 37% decrease in single-use plastics in each of three categories affected by the law, including single-use plastic bags, foam food containers and straws found as litter along the Jersey shore.
- There has been a reduction in the number of plastic straws purchased by convenience stores for distribution to customers, from 17 million to 2 million per month.

Guard Your Backyard



Ending Municipal Dumping of Unclean Soil Begins with Local Government

DEP’s Official Guide for Local Leaders, Businesses and Homeowners to Better Understand Soil and Fill Requirements, Protect Against Illegal Dumping and Protect Residents Against Receiving Tainted Materials

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has a campaign to help municipalities and communities manage fill material -- soils trucked in for construction projects, landscaping activities, or similar other uses on private residential properties.

Clean soil is fine, but sometimes soil or fill material which is sold or offered free of charge (advertised as “free clean fill”), may contain debris or contaminants that should not be on residential property.

At the heart of the “**Guard Your Backyard**” campaign is a dedicated website with guidance and a **model ordinance** that municipal leaders can download and modify to suit their local needs. Enacting ordinances can give local governments the authority to determine what kind of fill material may be brought into their communities. Visit www.guardyourbackyard.nj.gov for details.

The website contains additional guidance that all residents, local officials, and businesses should be aware of including information on the recent **Dirty Dirt Law (N.J.S.A. 13:1E-127.1 et. seq.)** useful DEP resources, and recommended actions everyone can take when soil or fill material is being used or transported.

When receiving soil or fill from a contractor or landscaper New Jersey residents should obtain information on the origin of the material to determine whether it is suitable for residential use, ensure all local codes and ordinances are met prior to accepting the material, and request the business to provide documentation that it is operating in compliance with New Jersey’s Law regulating soil and fill recycling services. **Visit the Guard Your Backyard Website for details.**

Tier A MS4 Stormwater General Permit Requires Municipalities to Adopt a Tree Removal/Replacement Ordinance

As part of the January 1, 2023, renewal permit action, the Tier A MS4 stormwater general permit included a new requirement municipalities to adopt a Tree Removal/Replacement Ordinance. Trees play a critical, often overlooked, role in the water cycle and can mitigate stormwater runoff issues. This ordinance is intended to ensure that permittees are considering these undervalued assets in their water quality management efforts.

This permit renewal requires permittees to adopt and enforce an ordinance to control tree removal and replacement to reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants, and to promote infiltration of rainwater into the soil.

The Department’s MS4 program worked with the Urban and Community Forestry group to develop the draft **model ordinance currently available** at: <https://dep.nj.gov/njpdcs-stormwater/municipal-stormwater-regulation-program/example-ordinances/> **for review and comment.**

You're Invited!

Join DEP at the Liberty State Park Revitalization Program Open House

