

"NATIONAL POST"

More than half of Canadians think banning sale of plastic bags a good idea: poll

Thirty-nine per cent think is a bad idea, according to the poll, which sampled 1,019 Canadian adults



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Fifty-nine per cent of Canadians think it's a good idea to forbid retail stores from handing out single-use plastic bags to customers, says a new public opinion poll from Angus Reid.

Thirty-nine per cent think is a bad idea, according to the poll, which sampled 1,019 Canadian adults.

The highest support for the ban came from Atlantic Canada, where 63% of those polled are in favour of the concept. Quebec and Alberta are next with 62% each, and then B.C. with 60%.

But only 54% of Ontario residents said they think the ban is a good idea.

Poll: Do you support a ban on plastic bags?

"What's fascinating is we do support the notion of the ban. People, especially those who shop at the stores already charging the money, have become accustomed to having their burlap sacks. So it's not a problem," said Mario Canseco, Vice President, Angus Reid Public Opinion.

Toronto city council unexpectedly banned the plastic bag during a meeting last week, legislation that will come into effect on Jan. 1, 2013.

The decision was lauded and criticized, the latter because the vote to ban the bags came after little consultation or public review. Councillors were in the midst of discussing the “bag tax,” which Mayor Rob Ford was pushing to eliminate.

During debate on the mayor’s proposal last week, Councillor Anthony Perruzza instead proposed a ban on single-use plastic bags starting Jan 1, 2014. In the end, it was Ford ally Councillor Shiner who, moved by his colleague’s impassioned arguments, won support to move the date up a year.

Ford called it “the dumbest thing council has done.”

But supporters of a ban on the plastic bag maintain the modern invention is an environmental scourge that ends up sitting in landfills for decades and in the ocean, where it threatens sea life.

A *National Post* web poll found 40% of respondents support banning plastic bags, whereas 56% don’t.

The Angus Reid poll indicated Canadian women, at 64%, and those aged 18 to 34, also at 64%, were more likely to support the ban than men and older Canadians.

More than half of Canadians said they agreed with the practice of charging a fee for plastic bags. Fifty-three per cent of those surveyed said they supported the practice, while 46% said they didn’t.

Toronto’s decision to ban the bag prompted discussions in municipalities across the country.

Halifax mayor Mayor Peter Kelly told the*National Post* he would not vote in favour of a bag ban, which, in his view, wouldn’t necessarily be better for the environment.

“If you do away with the plastic bags, what are we going to deal with? Paper?” he said. “How many more trees do we throw into the mix and the impact on the overall sustainability and that approach, whereby at least these bags in bulk can be recycled as they are.”

Any new plastic bag legislation in B.C. falls under provincial jurisdiction, and Premier Christy Clark hasn’t said whether she’s opposed or in favour of a ban in her province.

Several American cities have already banned the plastic bag, including Los Angeles, Portland, Ore., and San Francisco. Italy, Rwanda and Bangladesh have also instituted bans.

The Angus Reid poll used data obtained from online surveys conducted between June 5 and 7, 2012. The margin of error is +/- 3.1%.

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