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Single-use Plastic Bag Update *Can stores reuse plastic bags?*

(Silver City, NM, 13 February 2015)

It has been about one month since Town of Silver City ordinance 1231 went into effect. This ordinance restricts the use of single-use plastic carryout bags at retail merchants within Town limits. All of the major retailers are complying with the ordinance by providing paper bags, boxes, heavyweight reusable plastic bags, or eliminating bags altogether.

There are some stores that in the past provided used plastic bags to their customers. To fully comply with the ordinance these stores should not continue to hand out the single-use plastic bags but they can have a bin in the store for customers to leave such bags for other customers to use. It will be acceptable and encouraged for any store to handout reused paper bags or the new heavy weight plastic bags. It is anticipated that the supply of the thin plastic bags will gradually diminish and they will cease to be a litter problem.

If you have a large supply of the single-use plastic bags there are a couple of additional options for them rather than throwing them in the trash. They can be recycled in the plastic bag collection containers at WalMart, Albertson's and Food Basket. These plastic bags are returned to a special plastic film processor. You can also recycle clean and dry plastic film such as the wrap around toilet paper rolls, bread and cereal bags, bubble wrap, tyvek envelopes, air pillows and zip close bags in these bins. This is a much better way to recycle plastic bags than putting them in the curbside recycling bin where they can either blow out or get caught in the recycling processing equipment. Another option is to drop them off at the Office of Sustainability, 1106 N. Pope St. Monday through Thursday from 9 to 4. They will be reused for art projects or other special projects. For additional information contact the Office of Sustainability at 519-8987.

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