



**JOURNAL OFFICE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA**

*Telephone: 020 7219 3000 (switchboard)
020 7219 3310 (direct line)
020 7219 2269 (fax)*

Dear Sir/~~Madam~~

Please find enclosed a copy of the departmental observations on the Petition presented by you on the date shown on the attached sheet.

Anne-Marie Griffiths

Clerk of Public Petitions

Charge on Single Use Carrier Bags

The Petition of supporters of Penrith Action for Community Transition (PACT) in Penrith, Cumbria,

Declares that the Petitioners wish to see a significant reduction in the issuing of plastic carrier bags by retailers through the introduction of a compulsory charge, as in the case of Wales where a charge of 7p per bag is to be in place from spring 2011.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to introduce the compulsory charge on the issuing of single-use carrier bags in England, for which it has power under section 77 (and Schedule 6) of the Climate Change Act 2008.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.—[Presented, *Official Report*, 9 February 2011; Vol. 523, c. 3 P.]

[P000886]

Observations from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs:

The Government are working towards a zero-waste economy. To date, the Government have sought to achieve reductions in the amount of carrier bags issued via voluntary agreements, rather than legislation.

The first of two voluntary agreements, between UK Governments and 21 high street retailers, reduced the environmental impact of carrier bags by 40% between May 2006 and December 2008, exceeding the 25% target. Signatories to the agreement encouraged reuse of carrier bags, increased recycled content and reduced the weight of their carrier bags, among other measures.

The second agreement, between UK Governments and the UK's leading supermarkets (represented by the BRC), achieved a 48% reduction in numbers of bags distributed between May 2006 and May 2009.

The latest annual data for 2010 show a continuous year-on-year reduction in the numbers and in the weight of all bags. Since 2006, these have dropped by 41% and 42% respectively. For single use bags, the reduction was 43% in numbers and 51% in weight.

The Government are currently undertaking a review of all waste policy and the issue of single-use carrier bags will be included in this. This is expected to report in May.