

August 26, 2012

To the Honorable Members of the
Illinois Senate,
97th General Assembly:

I would like to commend the General Assembly for their important work on Senate Bill 3442. I pledge to continue working with lawmakers on this issue in the coming months.

Senate Bill 3442 creates a statewide plastic bag and film recycling program to reduce the number of bags and films that end up in our landfills each year. Specifically, the bill requires manufacturers to register with the Environmental Protection Agency and develop a recycling plan. Units of government nationwide have realized the growing problem of plastic film, which accounts for approximately 4% of waste in landfills. Only 3% of the 500,000 tons of plastic waste produced every year is currently recycled. Plastic bags are too often found tangled in trees, littering waterways, and harming wildlife. We must enact policies that prevent pollution and safeguard our communities and natural resources. As Governor, I am committed to preserving our environment for future generations.

Since this legislation was sent to me, many interested parties have raised important concerns regarding its potential effects. While I agree with the intent of the legislation, I share concerns that this program would not increase the rate of recycling beyond the natural growth. Local authorities and the environmental community strongly oppose this program because the metrics are simply not aggressive enough and home rule preemption prevents more stringent local regulation. This bill is more restrictive on municipalities than any other plastic bag regulation in the country, which creates a roadblock for locals to choose the policies that fit the needs of the area. Communities throughout the country experienced great success with different types of policies, as can be seen in the numerous municipalities in California that enacted an outright ban on plastic bags.

Local governments deserve the ability to enact environmental health laws that best respond to their communities. This bill hinders further opportunities to realize even greater benefits from other types of municipal plastic film regulation. I look forward to reviewing future policies that will bring Illinois to the forefront of sustainability.

Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I return Senate Bill 3442, entitled "AN ACT concerning safety.", with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN
Governor