

Metroland News

Bag ban on the back burner

Retailers to offer bag recycling program

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By Erin Hatfield

DURHAM -- Enforcement is harder than promotion, according to Regional Chairman Roger Anderson. That's why he's pleased with the 'Take It Back' program, which aims to reduce the number of plastic bags in the community without having to implement a total ban.

"It is a big step forward from the Region having to go forward with an outright ban," Mr. Anderson said.

Last May, Mr. Anderson asked staff to investigate banning the bags at stores across the Region. But, before this option was executed, staff discussed other measures with local retailers and bag producers to limit the amount of waste going to landfill.

Sobeys, A and P and Loblaws jumped on board with the Region's program, and will soon offer a plastic bag-recycling program and sell reusable shopping bags.

"The co-operation is phenomenal and it shows they are as concerned about the environment as we are," Mr. Anderson said. "I can only hope other department stores throughout the region follow their lead."

The Region's role is to actively promote the program, and for now he said a ban is on the back burner.

"I think my suggestion to ban plastic bags, the rush to do it will slow down a bit," Mr. Anderson said. "We will monitor how it is going and hopefully won't have to implement an outright ban."

The official launch of the retailers' plastic bag recycling and reusable bag program is scheduled for Sept. 20 at Regional headquarters.