

[Back to Article](#)

Toronto plastic bag ban upheld

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In another blow to Mayor Rob Ford, city council has voted not to reconsider its June decision to ban [plastic bags](#) as of Jan. 1.

Ford had urged the public to lobby their councillors to keep the bags. But Councillor David Shiner, the architect of the ban, said he only received eight calls.

• **Map: How your councillor voted**

The council decision in June to ban the bags could only be re-opened if two thirds of council agreed. The vote was 27-18, short of the two thirds threshold.

The move to reopen came in the wake of advice from the city solicitor that the ban was open to legal challenge because it was passed without first consulting the public and stakeholders.

The Canadian Plastics Industry Association, which has been fighting the ban since June, said legal action was an option.

"Bags are a necessity in Toronto," said association director general Marion Axmith. "Torontonians like plastic bags and they want to continue to have the option to use them."

Plastic shopping bags have received a bad rap, Axmith said.

"Torontonians rely on them for household pet and organic waste, 85 per cent of the bags are re-used, very few go to landfill and the balance are recycled in the blue box system into useful products."

Shiner, whose surprise motion in June to ban the bags passed 24-20, said public opinion is on his side.

"It's not the public that's outraged," he told reporters. "The mayor said call your councillor. I had eight phone calls. I have 65,000 people in my ward. People understand that it's the right thing to do.

Shiner said he will push for public consultations at the public works committee on what type of ban should be imposed.

He suggested that details such as the precise types of bags could be thrashed out in consultations; as well as whether retailers could use up existing stocks.

He expected a bylaw implementing the ban could be prepared by staff for next month's council meeting.

Technically, the bylaw could need to pass by a majority vote. If that didn't happen, then the ban wouldn't take effect.