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## JOINT RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE USE OF REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS

**WHEREAS**, in the future, establishing new landfill space will face increased technical and political siting challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, government oversight of solid waste management operations has become more costly to taxpayers; and

**WHEREAS**, public frustration has increased with nuisances regarding odor, truck traffic and litter and concern over groundwater contamination and emissions from garbage incineration; and

**WHEREAS**, the long-standing goal of the State of Maine to achieve a 50% recycling rate has yet to be met; and

**WHEREAS**, less than 5% of disposable plastic shopping bags are recycled, despite Maine's recycling laws, resulting in nearly 300 million bags dumped in landfills and incinerated or littered on Maine's highways and roads, in Maine's rivers, lakes and streams and along the seacoast; and

**WHEREAS**, disposable plastic shopping bags do not biodegrade and can remain in landfills for as long as 1,000 years; and

**WHEREAS**, the manufacture and transportation of disposable plastic shopping bags consume approximately 12 million barrels of oil each year in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, countries, states and cities around the world recognize the problems posed by the billions of disposable shopping bags entering the waste stream or littering the land and waters in their jurisdictions; and

**WHEREAS**, governments around the world seek to reduce the unnecessary consumption of oil that is costly and ever more difficult to obtain; and

**WHEREAS**, the manufacture and incineration of disposable plastic shopping bags contribute to increased greenhouse gases; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Maine's climate action plan seeks to reduce greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine retailers can enjoy significant savings on the cost of disposable shopping bags from customers supplying reusable shopping bags; and

**WHEREAS**, it is important to express appreciation for efforts by grocery stores to provide low-cost, long-lasting reusable shopping bags, which are now readily available at stores throughout Maine; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine's citizens are continuing to demonstrate support for common-sense, responsible conservation measures and environmental protection policies; now, therefore, be it

That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-third Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to express that we support voluntary, nonregulatory approaches to achieving goals in the public interest and that in recognition of Earth Day, April 22, 2008, we urge Maine citizen support for the statewide Earth Day goal that at least 50% of Maine's grocery store customers bring their own reusable shopping bags to grocery stores across Maine; and be it further

That We urge Governor John E. Baldacci and appropriate administrative departments to facilitate public education about the benefits of reusable shopping bags; and be it further

That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to Governor John E. Baldacci, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the Commissioner of Conservation, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the Director of the State Planning Office.