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Weaver Street Market celebrates Earth Day with single-use bag ban

Rachel Pittman, April 24, 2019

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Weaver Street Market employee Lauren Tilley shows off the "bring-it-back-sack," which will be an option for shoppers who don't bring reusable bags to the co-op. Weaver Street's locations will no longer offer single-use bags as the result of a program that was launched Monday on Earth Day.

Rachel Pittman/News of Orange

Weaver Street Market will no longer provide shoppers with paper nor plastic following a new co-op wide ban on single-use shopping bags.

"Our consumer and worker-owners realize that we need to take bold steps to reduce harm to the environment and reverse global warming," Weaver Street Market General Manager Ruffin Slater said.

The ban, which went into effect on Monday in honor of Earth Day, is the first of its kind put into place by a grocery store in North Carolina. It was accompanied by some new reusable bag options at the co-op.

If customers do not own reusable bags or forget their bags at home, they will be able to purchase a Weaver Street bag for 99 cents or a “bring-it-back-sack” for 15 cents, or pick up a returned and sanitized bring-it-back-sack for free.

Made for the co-op by Roplast Industries in Oroville, C.A., bring-it-back-sacks are durable plastic bags that can be used up to 125 times. The product has a closed loop manufacturing process, meaning that Weaver Street will send worn out sacks back to Roplast to be made into more of the same bags.

“The key to the program was this innovative approach to make sure that shoppers would always use a reusable bag because, on some trips, we all forget our bags,” Slater said.

According to Slater, the ban will eliminate some one million single-use bags from the Triangle. Orange County Solid Waste Planner Blair Pollock said that his department supports the ban.

“We favor reducing bag use over recycling,” Pollock said. “Everytime reduction and reuse of plastic bags are much more effective ways of dealing with plastic bags than recycling them, and Weaver Street is in the lead on this.”

Weaver Street owners developed the proposal for the ban in fall 2018 as a first step in revamping all of their packaging with both the environment and consumer convenience in mind.

Affordable, reusable produce bags and returnable deli containers for the in-market hot bars and salad bars are on the table as next steps for the co-op’s new packaging strategy.

“Weaver Street really cares about this community on both a local and a global scale,” Weaver Street Market Cashier Lauren Tilley said. “This ban really encourages people to think about the impact that they’re having and that their trash is having.”