

**BERNALILLO COUNTY**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2019-15**

1 WHEREAS, the U.S. each year generates more than 4 million tons of plastic bags, sacks  
2 and wraps, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, and only about 13 percent of that  
3 plastic is recycled;

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5 WHEREAS, single-use plastic bags eventually make their way to landfills and into our  
6 oceans, adding to the 8 million metric tons of plastic entering the ocean every year;

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8 WHEREAS, the majority of single-use plastic bags and polystyrene containers do not  
9 biodegrade but rather persist in the environment for hundreds of years, even though they are only  
10 used for a few minutes; and

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12 WHEREAS, thousands of single-use plastic bags and polystyrene containers contribute to  
13 public litter;

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15 WHEREAS, the production of polystyrene creates greenhouse gases and polystyrene  
16 products take more than 500 years to degrade, even though they are only used for a few minutes;

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18 WHEREAS, single-use plastic bags, when mistakenly placed in recycling bins, often jam  
19 recycling equipment resulting in work stoppages and loss of efficiency at recycling facilities;

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21 WHEREAS, major American companies have announced plans to end the use of  
22 polystyrene cups and containers; and,

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24 WHEREAS, at least 350 local governments in the United States have banned the use of  
25 single-use plastic bags and major retailers have announced plans to end the use of single-use  
26 plastic bags in all stores by 2025.

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28 **Section 1. Purpose**

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30 The production and disposal of single-use plastic bags and single-use polystyrene containers  
31 create significant environmental impacts including the contamination of the environment,  
32 ingestion and entanglement by wildlife, and widespread litter. Single-use polystyrene containers  
33 create non-recyclable and non-degradable refuse streams while more environmentally sensitive  
34 alternatives are available. The purpose of this Ordinance is to protect and enhance the County's  
35 unique and precious environment, wildlife, and beauty through the reduction of single-use non-  
36 compostable or non-recyclable bags and containers, and to encourage the use of reusable or  
37 sustainable options.

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39 **Section 2. Applicability**

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