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Hot air over plastic

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Editorials

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There is something delightfully, charmingly trivial about the current effort by environmental zealots to ban ... plastic grocery bags.

Yes, in times of trial and of crisis there's nothing like those who remain caught up in their own little worlds — making the world a safer place one plastic bag at a time. Kind of like those precious people of Concord who succeeded in banning single serving water bottles.

Now fresh from successes in Brookline and Manchester-by-the-Sea, the bag banners want to make Massachusetts the first state *in the nation* to ban the pesky things statewide. And they are kind of pesky — they're always too small, not strong enough (and thus require double-bagging) and so given a choice we'll take paper every time.

Still, isn't that a choice consumers can make for themselves? Many stores do offer a choice. Many consumers have opted for reusable bags — which nearly all grocery stores are now offering for purchase at the check-out.

Ah, but this is Massachusetts. So why should people or merchants be able to make a choice when governmentalways knows best.

Roxanne Zak of the Sierra Club told a legislative committee this past week, that the bags "are creating an environmental crisis for us here and in the whole world, not just the United States."

Well, not sure how Massachusetts will tackle the "whole world" problem but in the Massachusetts Legislature there's always someone willing to try.

"I think there is a growing movement across society," Sen. Marc Pacheco (D-Taunton) told State House News Service.

Yes, we can see the ban-the-bag troops marching on Beacon Hill, pleading for action. Or maybe those who feel strongly about the issue will simply pick up their sturdy reusable totes and march off to the grocery content in the knowledge that they are walking the walk rather than blowing hot air.

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