

# HOW TO SAVE TORONTO'S TREE CANOPY 5-CENTS AT A TIME

*THE EXISTING TREE CANOPY IN TORONTO IS UNDER THREAT BY SEVERAL INVASIVE SPECIES AND AN AGING TREE POPULATION. WE NEED TO EXTEND AN OLIVE BRANCH TO MAJOR CITY RETAILERS TO DONATE BAG SALE PROCEEDS TO THE CITY'S TREE CANOPY PROGRAM. MAJOR RETAILERS WILL BE THE TARGET OF THE CAMPAIGN BECAUSE THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LARGEST PORTION OF BAG USE AND RESULTING REVENUES.*

## FACTS ABOUT TORONTO'S TREE CANOPY

- TORONTO'S URBAN FOREST INCLUDES AN ESTIMATED 10.2 MILLION TREES. THE CITY OF TORONTO (URBAN FORESTRY) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING APPROXIMATELY 4 MILLION TREES FOUND THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND WITHIN OUR PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS.
- TORONTO'S URBAN FOREST FACES MULTIPLE THREATS:
  - 860,000 TREES ARE THREATENED BY THE EMERALD ASH BORER; IF ALL ASH TREES ARE LOST THE CITY'S FOREST COVER WILL FALL FROM 19.9% TO 18.3%
  - 4.5 MILLION TREES ARE AT RISK FROM THE ASIAN LONG-HORNED BEETLE; THAT REPRESENTS 42.9% OF THE CITY'S TREE POPULATION
  - ANOTHER 1.5 MILLION TREES ARE AT RISK FROM THE GYPSY MOTH
  - 200,000 MORE TREES ARE THREATENED BY DUTCH ELM DISEASE
- WITHIN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, TORONTO WILL NEED TO SPEND \$80 MILLION TO MITIGATE DAMAGE TO THE TREE CANOPY
- PROJECTED ANNUAL EMERALD ASH BORER TREE REPLACEMENT PROJECT EXPENDITURES ALONE WILL BE \$10 MILLION PER YEAR OVER THE NEXT 6 YEARS
- OUR TREE CANOPY SERVES A VARIETY OF IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL SERVICES VALUED AT OVER \$60 MILLION DOLLARS WHICH INCLUDE:
  - ENERGY SAVINGS AND EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS
  - AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS
  - CARBON STORAGE AND SEQUESTRATION
  - NOISE ATTENUATION
  - COOLER TEMPERATURES
  - HIGHER PROPERTY VALUES (UP TO 18%), PSYCHOLOGICAL AND HEALTH BENEFITS
  - AND CREATION OF WILDLIFE HABITAT



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## FACTS ABOUT TORONTO'S BAG FEE:

- THE 5 CENT BAG TAX BY-LAW WAS IMPLEMENTED BY CITY COUNCIL IN JUNE OF 2009 IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF BAGS SENT TO LANDFILLS
- THE FEE HAS SUCCESSFULLY DIVERTED APPROXIMATELY 215 MILLION BAGS TO DATE
- BAG USAGE HAS DECLINED BY APPROXIMATELY 53%, WITH CERTAIN RETAILERS REPORTING A DECREASE OF AS MUCH AS 70%
- AFTER ALL COSTS, MAJOR RETAILERS ARE STILL COLLECTING ABOUT \$4,000,000 / YEAR FROM THE 5-CENT BAG FEE
- SOME RETAILERS ARE DONATING A PORTION OF THE FUNDS TO NOBLE CAUSES, SUCH AS THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND AND PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL. HOWEVER, NOT ALL FUNDS ARE BEING DONATED. MAJOR RETAILERS SHOULD KEEP TORONTO'S NEEDS FRONT AND CENTRE WHEN DECIDING HOW TO DONATE THE REST OF THE MONEY!
- BY ATTRACTING JUST 10% OF THE MAJOR RETAILER'S NET REVENUES THE CITY WOULD RECEIVE \$270,000 PER YEAR TO MAINTAIN TORONTO'S TREE CANOPY
- THE RELATIVELY SMALL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION COLLECTED THROUGH THIS PARTNERSHIP WILL HELP TORONTO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE SERIOUS CHALLENGES FACING OUR CITY'S FOREST COVER; THIS WILL ULTIMATELY HELP US RAISE ADDITIONAL MONEY TO KEEP OUR CITY GREEN
- EVEN IF CITY COUNCIL VOTES DOWN THE ROAD TO SCRAP TORONTO'S BAG TAX, MOST MAJOR RETAILERS HAVE IMPLEMENTED NATIONAL POLICIES THAT CALL FOR A FIVE-CENT FEE REGARDLESS OF A LOCAL BY-LAW



## THE PROPOSAL:

TO WORK WITH THE TORONTO OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS, IN CONSULTATION WITH STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND PARKS, FORESTRY AND RECREATION TO PREPARE A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY REQUESTING MAJOR RETAILERS IN THE CITY OF TORONTO TO CONSIDER DONATING A PORTION OF THEIR BAG FEE PROFITS TO THE CITY OF TORONTO'S TREE CANOPY PROGRAM. WE WILL RECOGNIZE THEIR CONTRIBUTION THROUGH A BRANDED PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY AND MATCHING FUNDS FROM UPPER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER NON-RETAIL CORPORATIONS. WE WILL ALSO ORGANIZE A TREE SUMMIT FOR THIS FALL THAT WILL BRING TOGETHER MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS, RETAILERS AND NON-PROFIT GROUPS TO DEVELOP A LONG-TERM STRATEGY AIMED AT KEEPING TORONTO A CITY WITHIN A PARK!