

For RiverSpeak

There has been educational activity around plastic bags in Horry in Georgetown Counties at least since November 16, 2011, when Captain Charlie Moore, discoverer of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch was invited to introduce the film Plastic Ocean at Tara Theater. The establishment of the Chirping Bird Society was accompanied by publication of a book for youth aged readers, Sullie Saves the Seas by Goffinet McLaren. Local businesses and groups have been honored by the Chirping Birds for using low waste strategies, and presented with Certificates of Recognition.

Other partners have appeared to expand the message. The Trash Reduction Act of 2013, sponsored in Congress by Representative Jim Moran of Virginia was supported. Comments have been submitted to the Horry County Solid Waste Authority Board, and a survey completed on August 13 and September 3, 2016. This survey of Farmer's Market shoppers revealed that of the 76 respondents, there was concern about litter, harming wildlife and impact on human health. Also, 45% of the respondents supported a ten cent user fee per bag, and 36% were "unsure".

A public education forum was provided by the League of Women Voters of Horry County on September 28, 2016. Participants included Teresa Marshall, Council member of the Town of Folly Beach where a bag ban was rapidly passed. Partner groups, including Wildlife Action, Inc., Surfrider Foundation, Coastal Carolina University Eco-Reps and Palmetto Pride share concerns and solutions through discussion and table displays.

With the return of the Auxilliary Container Bill as H. 3529, the League of Women Voters and many other groups have submitted comments to the House Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee. Grassroots efforts to defeat this bill that has been introduced in legislatures throughout the country are ongoing by the Chirping Bird Society and partner groups. LWV member Ernestine Allen's letter to the editor "Plastic Bags Hurt the Environment" was published in the Horry Independent on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The need to address this bill is evident- in addition to removing local control of a portion of the waste stream, it would inhibit County residents from addressing toxic litter issues in our water bodies.

Submitted by Grace Gifford