

**Emiljana Ulaj**

Legislator, 9th District  
Chair, Labor & Human Rights

**Committee Assignments:**

Legislation  
Economic Development  
Law & Major Contracts

**MEMORANDUM OF LEGISLATION**

**DATE:** May 05, 2025

**TITLE:** Shelf to Soil Act

**SPONSORS:** Legislator Emiljana Ulaj

**PURPOSE OR GENERAL IDEA OF BILL:** A law to require grocery stores and supermarkets throughout Westchester County to offer commercially compostable bags to customers, rather than plastic bags, to package produce or meat.

**INTENT:** To reduce the use of plastic bags during grocery shopping and to offer customers commercially compostable bags.

**JUSTIFICATION:** When Westchester residents go grocery shopping, most establishments offer them thin, single-use plastic bags at the produce and poultry departments to package their chosen items during their trip. Unfortunately, these bags represent an outdated and unsustainable practice that contradicts Westchester County's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Westchester County's Residential Food Scrap Transportation and Disposal (RFSTAD) Program offers an opportunity to synergize. Since its inception in the Fall of 2020, RFSTAF has been tremendously successful with nearly [30 municipalities](#) throughout the County—representing a super majority of the population—living in a municipality that participates in a food scrap recovery program. This widespread adoption of RFSTAF underscores our commitment to diverting organic waste from waste streams, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating valuable compost.

Participants of the local municipal programs usually gather their food scraps on their kitchen counter in a small bin lined by a commercially compostable bag until they are ready to drop it off at a designated site. Requiring that grocery stores offer commercially compostable bags to customers rather than plastic bags encourages Westchester residents to participate in their local food scrap recovery program all the while further reducing the use of plastic bags.

The mandated use of commercially compostable bags in grocery stores will raise public awareness about composting. It also serves as a tangible and consistent reminder of the County's environmental goals and encourages residents to adopt more eco-conscious habits.

This legislation is a practical measure that will contribute to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable Westchester County for all.

**PRESENT LAW:** NONE.

cc: Dylan Tragni, Chief of Staff  
Marcello Figueroa, Legislative Director  
Lisa Hochman, legislative Counsel