

The Vermont laws, and what we can do to help

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I consider myself an activist when it comes to the environment. I have found myself starting programs and other groups about the environment and keeping it safe since the third grade. So when I was told about this essay project I was totally going to participate.

One of my main focuses for this essay is that Vermont has protective laws, banned billboards, composting, etc. but is that enough?

I'm here to say that it might not be. For example, 20% of Vermont's waste is food, for a state that has had a composting law since 2012, that's a big number. But when you look into the law you can see that on July 1st 2020, there was an amendment made to the law allowing meat scraps and bones to not be composted, meat makes up a large amount of the food an average person eats. I do admit that sometimes our family composting is forgotten, our family does this thing called backyard composting, where we dump all of our food scraps in the woods to turn into compost. Our family has never composted meat, we feed it to our dogs, and for bones, we have always just thrown them away. I personally can see how this might be a threat to the environment in the future, but unfortunately this isn't the only problem with laws that Vermont has.

Another issue is with the billboard laws, as many know Vermont was the first of four states to ban billboards, in this law billboards count as off premise advertising signs. But you can still have large signs on the property. I don't see why this loophole to the laws makes it effective at all, I just find it counterproductive to make a law banning billboards for the sake of clearing the environment, but then adding a loophole so that people could still have the same, or similar signs just on the property is counterproductive. And to make it worse, according to NBC news, the billboard law is currently being threatened. Will the 40+ year long billboard rule live to be 50? Or will Vermont end up with the same billboards as many other cities and states?

Another point I make is green up day, I'm sure that at least one of the people reading this essay has heard of it. It's a day all about the earth, and keeping it clean. How you celebrate is by cleaning up litter from the sides of roads. With all the litter, where would you keep it all? Well part of it is putting the litter in plastic bags, I don't know if at this point people have switched over to a more environmentally friendly option, but last time we participated in green up day we used plastic, or something like that. I find the fact that people are using plastic bags to clean up litter counterproductive to the next level.

I feel it's wrong to leave the essay here, without saying what people can do to help. First of all I know that not everyone reading this has the power to change the law, but there are still some things you can do at home to help. For example, when you get takeout food do you save the containers? I'm not talking about the cardboard takeout containers you might find containing rice, I'm talking about the hard plastic microwave safe containers. These can make great reusable tupperware, and this hack goes as far as to cover yogurt and even dip containers too! It has always been a habit of our family to save these containers, and I was surprised when I learned that not everybody did this. Also if you ever find yourself in a position where you've bought sodas and it has the plastic around it used to keep the pack together, always cut the loops where

the sodas are inserted. I'm sure you've all seen at least one of those sad photos of a sea animal with its head stuck in the hole, this can be an easy prevention. And the last thing I am going to mention in detail is the use of bee wrap, it's like a reusable plastic wrap. It's made out of a cotton cloth with beeswax coating it, all you have to do after using it is follow the wash instructions and use it again!

The point I'm trying to prove here is that no matter how old you are, or where you live (not even just Vermont) you can always find a way to contribute to a better environment, from bringing a reusable cup when you get a drink, to holding off on buying that 25 cent plastic toy at the grocery store. And If we all work together, we can create a better future for Vermont as a state.

Resources used

State of Vermont waste composition study final report May, 2013

Universal recycling law-CSWD.net

Billboard and sign control-VNRC

Vermont's 40 year old billboard ban threatened-NBC