

Montgomery County Sierra Club Group

Montgomery County Shopper Survey, 2019



**SIERRA
CLUB**

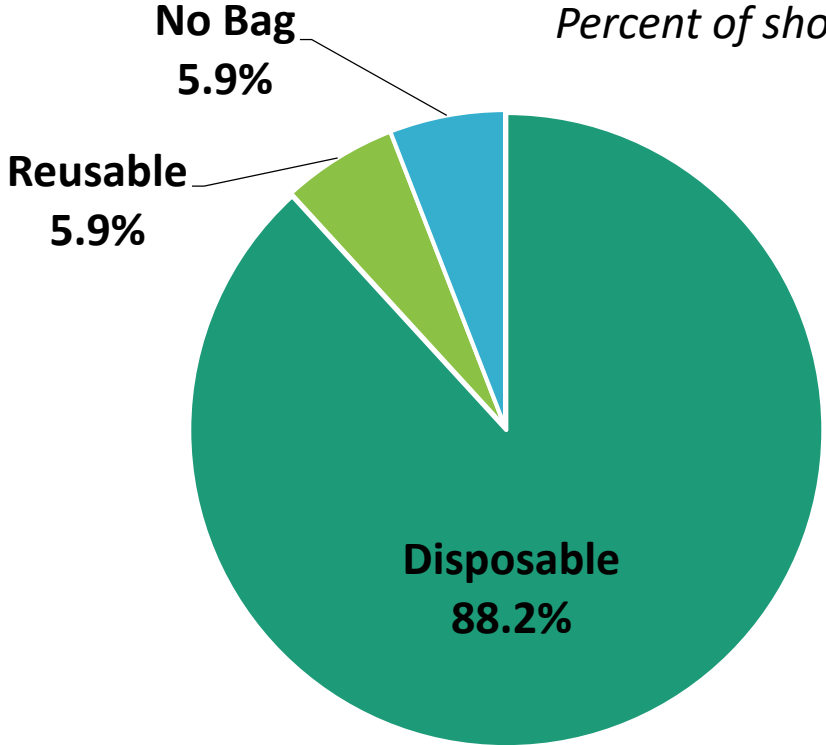
Montgomery County, Maryland

Methodology

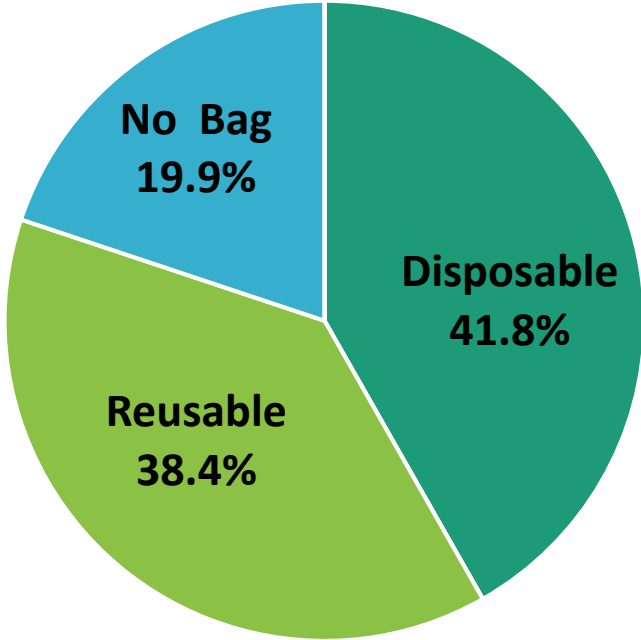
- 57 grocery stores surveyed for one hour at each door
- Hours Observed: Saturdays 9am-6pm; Sundays 12pm-6pm
- *Chains*: Food Lion (1); Giant (27); Harris Teeter (6); Safeway (18); Shoppers (3); Wegmans (1).
- *International Stores*: Lotte Plaza (4), Megamart (2)
- *Chain phasing out free single-use bags*: Weis Markets (not included in totals)
- Not included: Whole Foods, Trader Joes (do not provide plastic bags at point of sale)
- Survey conducted Fall, 2019
- 9,484 shoppers observed
- *Disposable bags include*: plastic, paper or mix of both
- *Reusable bags include*: any type of reusable bag or a mix of paper or plastic and reusable.

Montgomery County's Bag Fee is Still Effective, Relative to a County with No Fee

Percent of shoppers by shopping bag choice



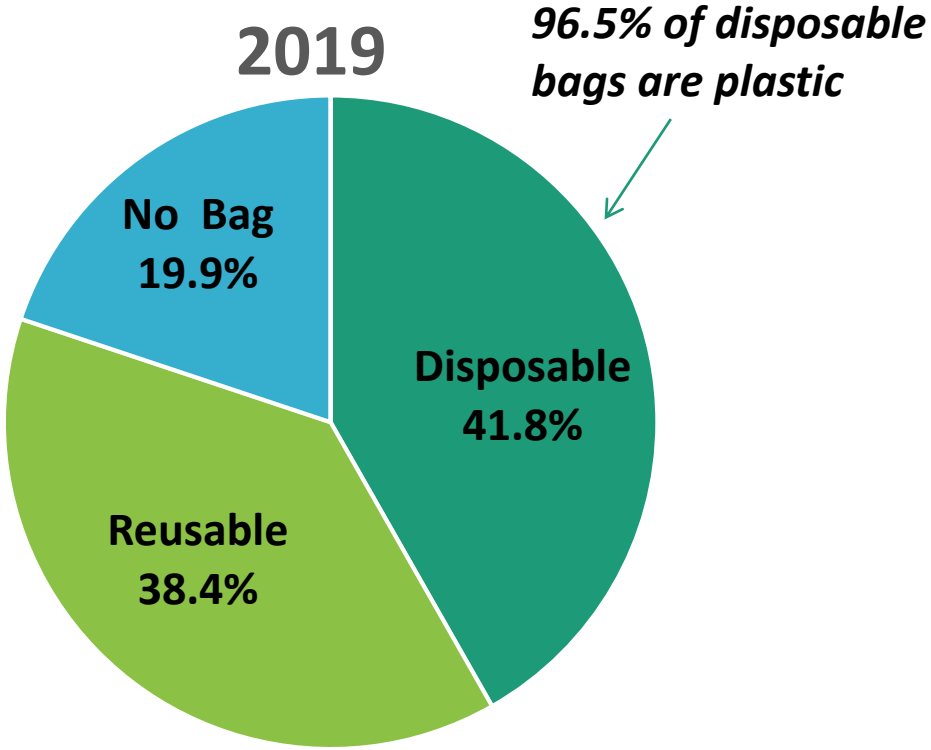
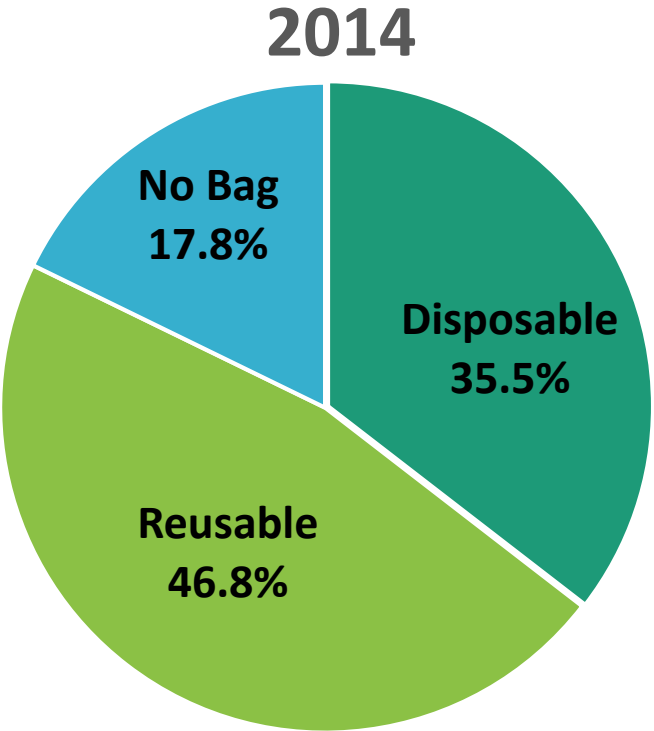
Prince George's County



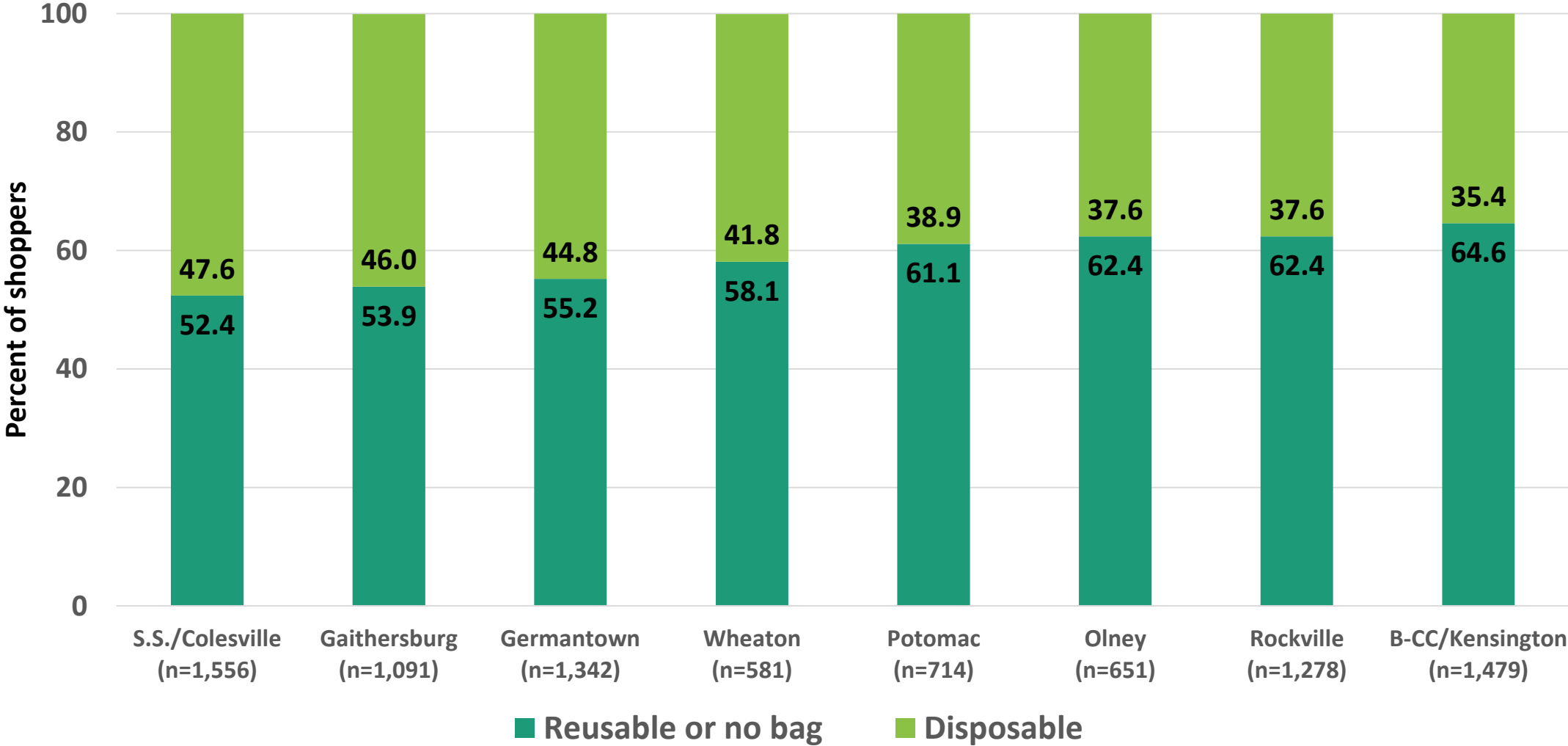
Montgomery County

However, Reusable Bag Use Declined, and Disposable Bag Use Increased

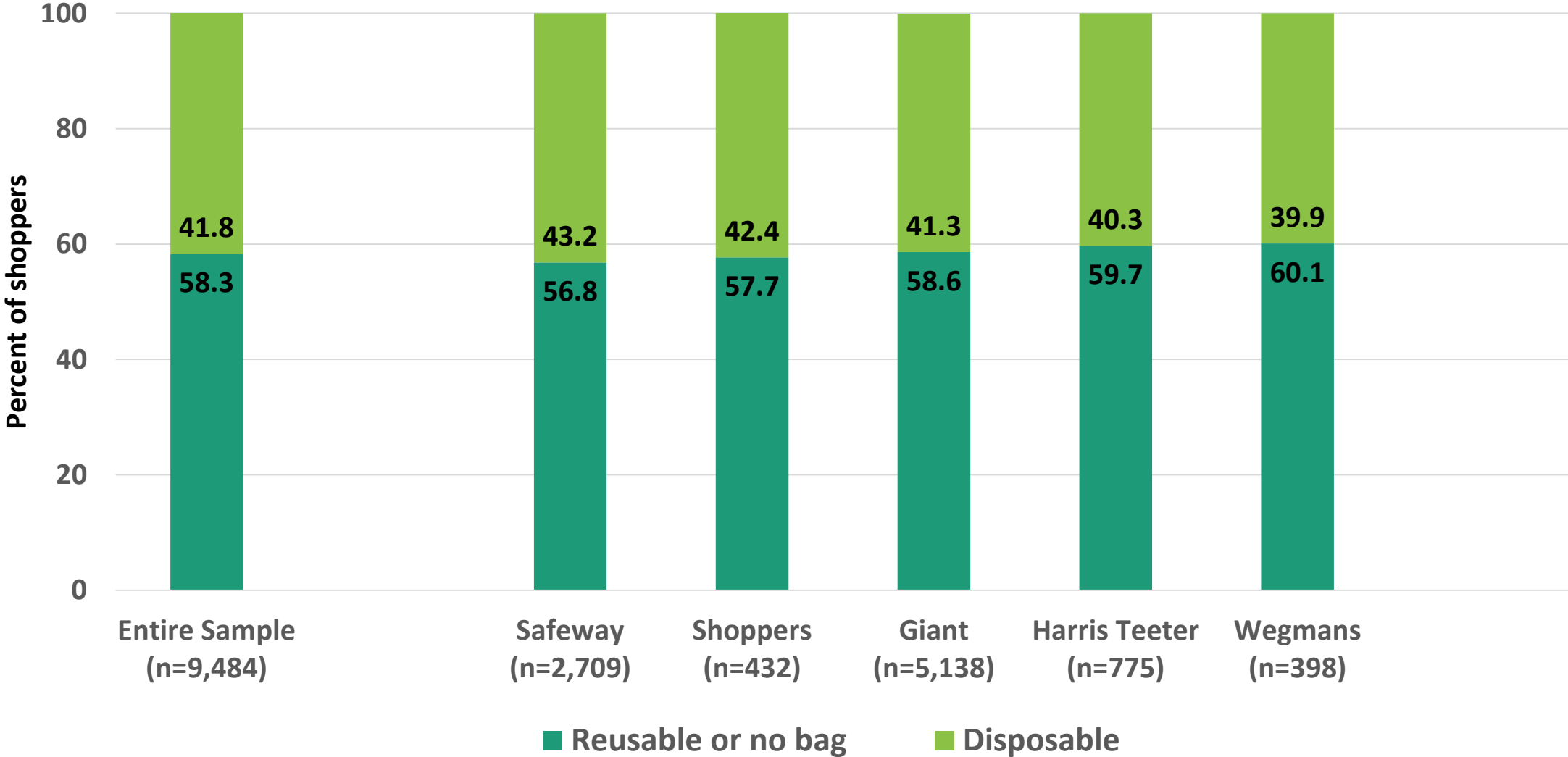
Percent of shoppers by shopping bag choice



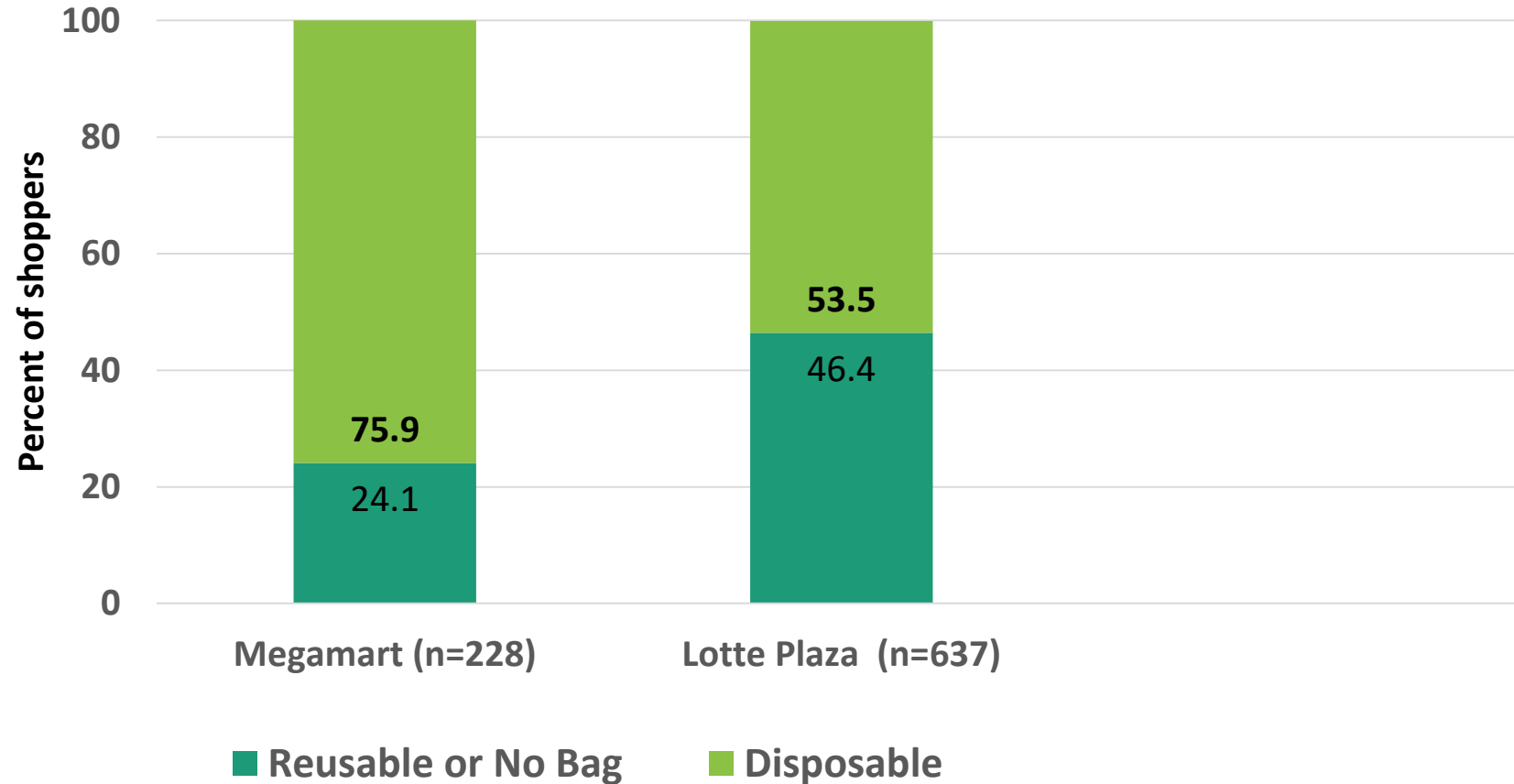
Shopper Bag Choices at Montgomery County Grocery Stores by Jurisdiction, 2019



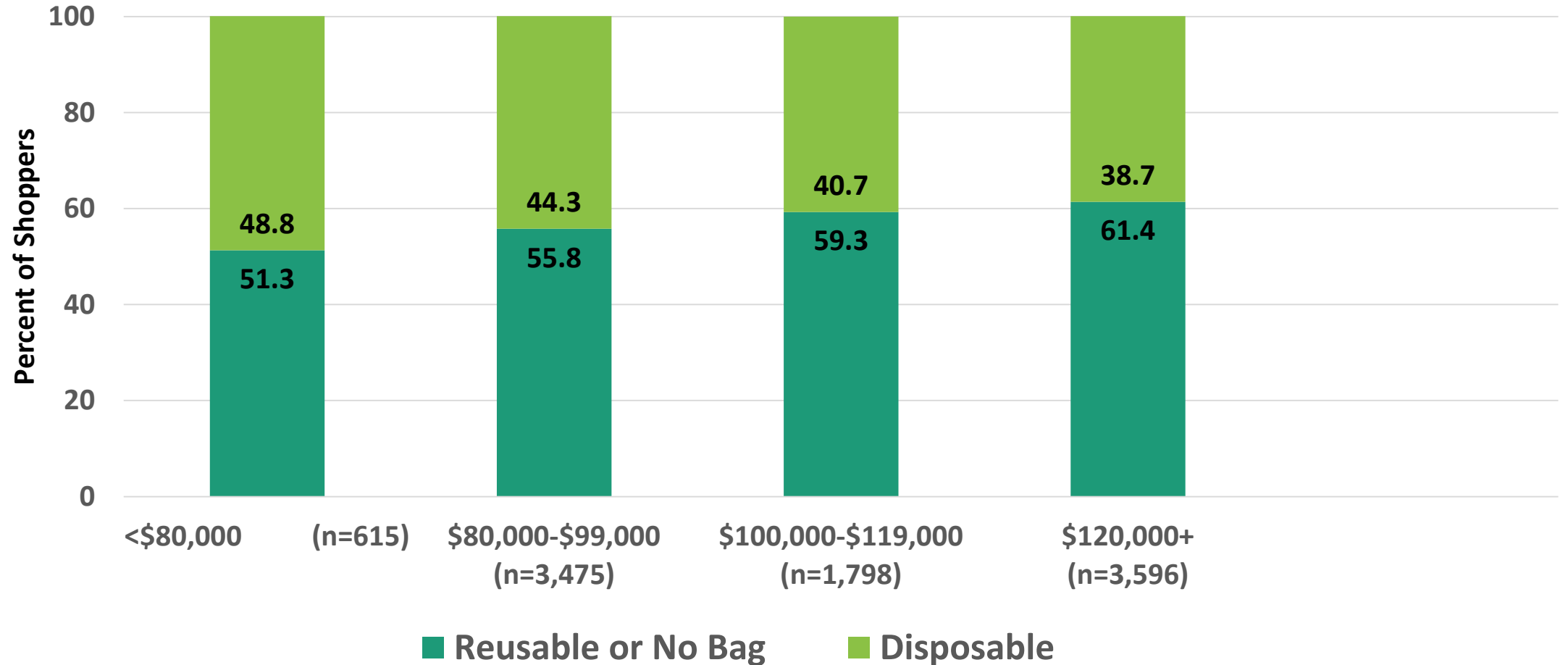
Shopper Bag Choices at Montgomery County Grocery Stores by Chain, 2019



Shoppers at International Grocery Stores Have Substantially Higher Disposable Bag Use Than Shoppers at Other Chains, 2019

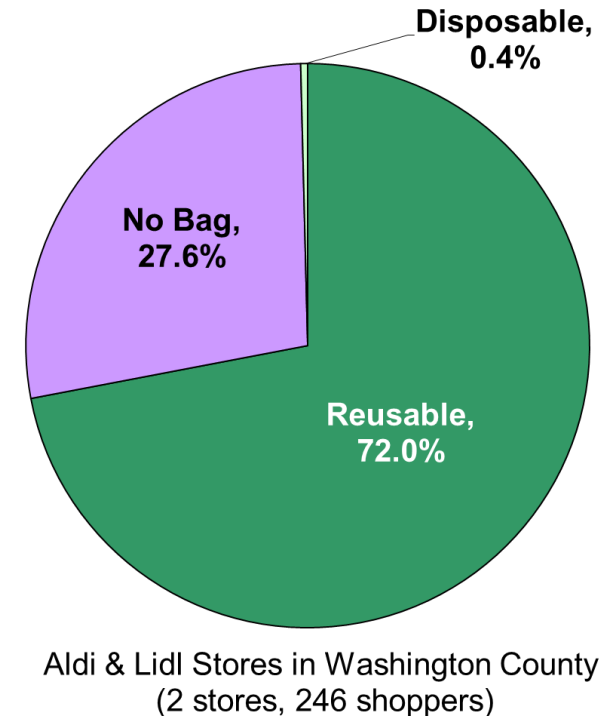
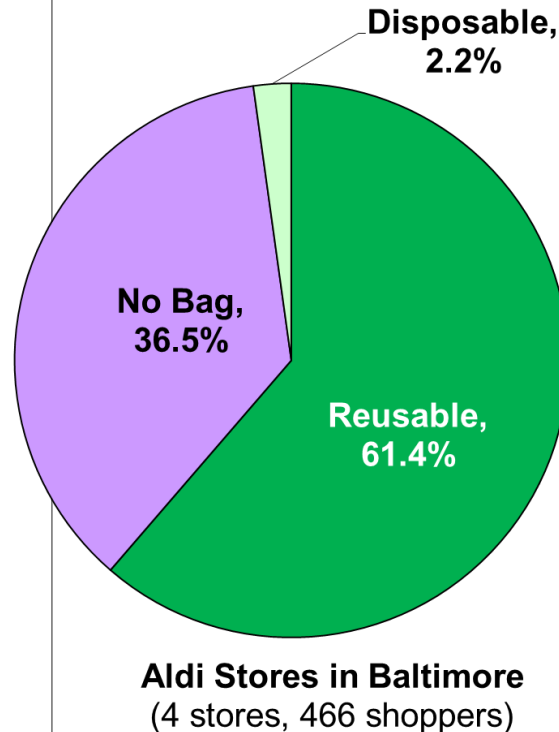
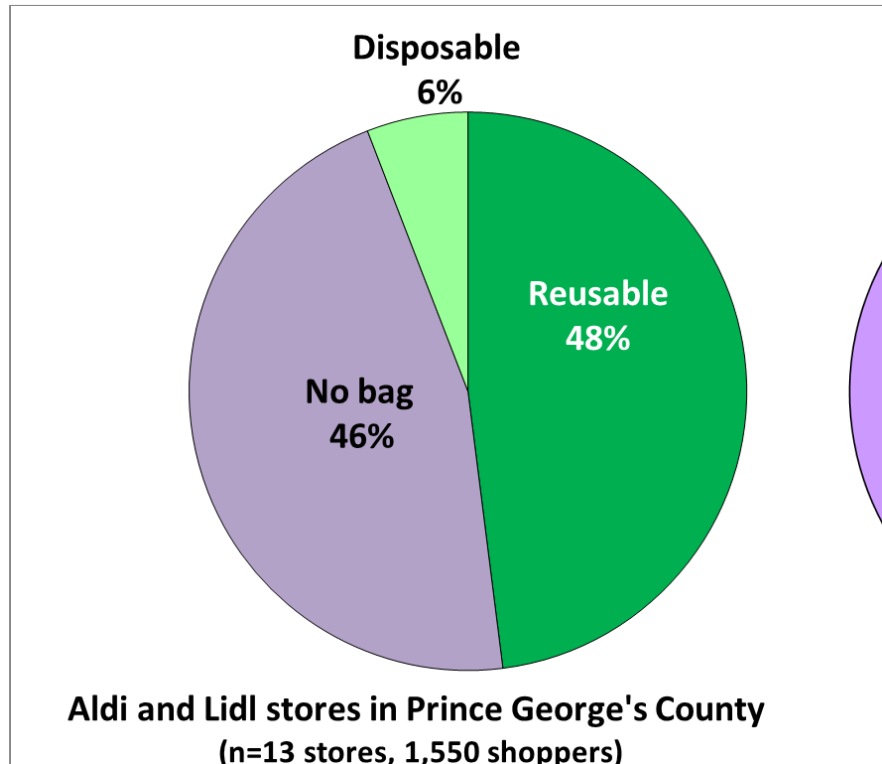


Shopper Bag Choices at Montgomery County Grocery Stores by Median Household Income,* 2019



* Median household income in the store's zip code.

When thin plastic bags aren't available and other bags cost, almost everyone brings a bag or takes no bag at all



This is what we might expect with a ban on plastic carryout bags and if retailers charged for other bags in Montgomery County!

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Since its implementation, Montgomery County fee has been highly effective in reducing single-use plastic bags, especially in relation to counties with no fee.
- But a drop from 47% to 38 % reusable/no bag is going in the wrong direction.
- The rise in grocery pick-up and delivery services may also be contributing to the problem because these services use single-use paper or plastic bags. Some stores may not be charging the 5-cent fee.
- Sierra Club supports a statewide plastic bag ban/10 cent paper fee to make even more progress across the state.
- More consumer and store compliance education needed, especially in communities with heavy international populations. Signage may be needed in some locations.
- County could partner w/large chains to reduce produce bags.
- Dry cleaning bags are another target of opportunity.

This report was researched and written by
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