

Plastic Bags: An Environmentally Responsible Choice



 American
Chemistry
Council



Who are the Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council?



The **American Chemistry Council (ACC)** represents the companies that make modern life possible, while working to protect the environment, public health and the security of our nation.



The **Progressive Bag Affiliates (PBA)** of the ACC represent the major bag manufacturers, resin producers and bag recyclers.



We are committed to creating positive change in our communities by **promoting the increased recycling of plastic bags**, as well as their proper use, reuse and disposal.





A Brief History of the Plastic Bag: An Environmental Solution

Plastic bags were introduced in the 1970's as an **environmentally-friendly** way to address concerns about **excessive logging** and the negative impact consumer **demand for paper bags** were having on America's forests.



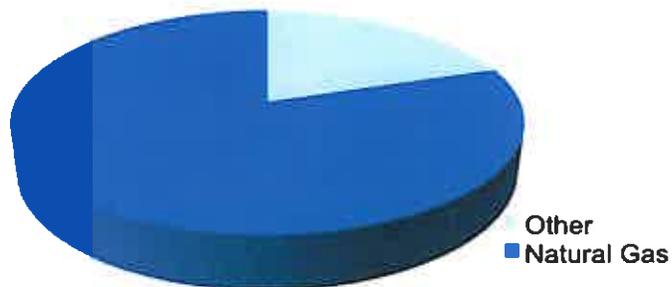


Reality Check: Energy Efficient

Plastic bags require **70% less energy** to make

Contrary to public perception, plastic bags in the United States are made primarily (**80%**) of ethane – a by-product of domestic natural gas.

What Goes into Making a Plastic Bag?





Reality Check: Less Air Pollution



Just **1** delivery truck full of plastic bags

Requires **7** trips for the same number of paper bags



And plastic bags generate **50% FEWER greenhouse gas** emissions compared with the manufacturing of paper bags.





Reality Check: A Drop in the Bucket

Plastic shopping bags represent **LESS THAN 0.5 %** of the total U.S. municipal solid waste stream.

Because they are fully recyclable, why can't we work together to lower that number to **ZERO PERCENT?**





Benefits of Plastic Bags: Convenient & Affordable



Plastic Bags are especially **convenient** and **affordable** for seniors, people who take public transportation, and others on fixed incomes.





Benefits of Plastic Bags: Reuse

MORE THAN 90% of Americans Reuse their Plastic Bags!





Benefits of Plastic Bags: Conservation of Natural Resources

- Plastic bags generate **80% LESS WASTE** than paper bags
- It takes **91% LESS ENERGY** to recycle a pound of plastic than it takes to recycle a pound of paper
- The production of plastic bags consumes **LESS THAN 6% OF THE WATER** needed to make paper bags.





Unintended Consequences

Still, San Francisco mandated that grocery bags be biodegradable. That policy has likely **INCREASED** the use of paper bags.





Unintended Consequences



Ireland is often cited as having *reduced* plastic grocery bag usage by 90+% after taxing each bag \$.20.

Not told when the statistic is cited is that overall **sales of other plastic bags shot up 400%** as consumers were forced to purchase replacement bags for the grocery bags they once were able to reuse.



Unintended Consequences

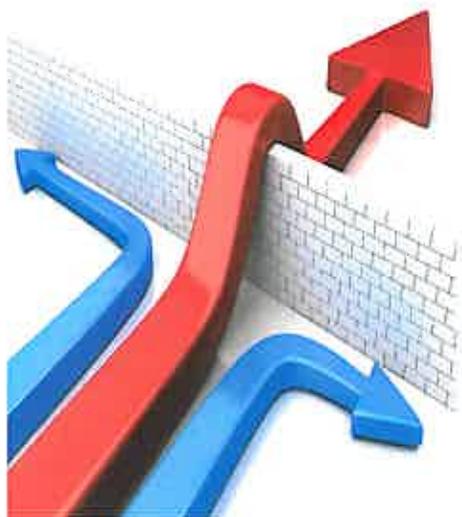


After the **Oakland City Council** voted to ban plastic bags, they were sued by a group (not PBA) that asked the city to follow a state law that required a valid examination of **unintended environmental consequences** . . . A judge in that case agreed.





Bans Don't Work...



Banning recyclable plastic bags will **not reduce dependence on oil**.

Mandating that recyclable plastic bags be replaced with biodegradable or compostable bags **will not reduce litter or waste** in our landfills.

Banning recyclable plastic bags or mandating their replacement with compostable bags will **diminish efforts to recycle** these products.

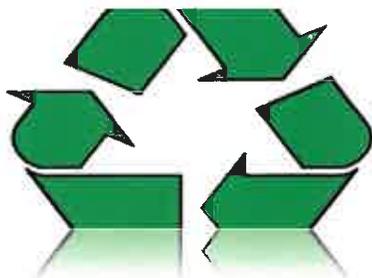




Recycling is the Answer

California was the first state in the nation to establish recycling as a smart policy decision, **mandating** or **requiring** plastic bag recycling programs.

And many large grocery and retail chains have implemented at-store recycling programs on their own.





Recycling is the Answer

Across the nation, plastic bag recycling is catching on.

In 2006, the recycling of plastic bags and wraps shot up to 812 million pounds, a **24% INCREASE** in a single year.



And the **momentum** continues to build. People are recycling plastic bags like never before.





Recycling is the Answer

Municipalities here are playing a big role in increased recycling opportunities:

- ✧ Los Angeles County
- ✧ Hesperia, CA
- ✧ Solana Beach, CA

Elsewhere, the plastic bag recycling movement is growing:

- ✧ Chicago, IL
- ✧ Phoenix, AZ
- ✧ Tempe, AZ
- ✧ Austin, TX
- ✧ Albany Co., NY
- ✧ Nassau Co., NY
- ✧ Rockland Co., NY
- ✧ Suffolk Co., NY





Recycling is the Answer

In addition to recycling plastic grocery and retail bags, these programs allow shoppers to recycle their plastic **dry cleaning bags, newspaper bags, and bread bags as well as wraps from paper towels, napkins, diapers and toilet paper.**

Banning plastic bags would **eliminate programs to recycle** other products that are currently recycled with plastic bags.





Recycling is the Answer

The Progressive Bag Affiliates (PBA) offers a wealth of resources and expertise to **assist communities** in developing effective recycling programs.

We have developed educational materials for grocery stores and **promoted plastic bag recycling** throughout the country.

For example, the PBA recycling toolkit is being used by grocers and retailers around the nation as a reference for determining the best ways to deploy effective recycling in stores.

<http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org>





Recycling is the Answer



Plastic bags can be recycled into **park benches**, **decking** for boardwalks and **porches**, **pallets** and even back in to **plastic bags**.





Recycling is the Answer

The overwhelming majority of policy makers who have looked at plastic bags policies have opted for recycling because it **MAKES SENSE** both economically and environmentally.

**PLASTICS. TOO
VALUABLE TO
WASTE. RECYCLE.**





Together, We Can Make a Difference

The Progressive Bag Affiliates is committed to **recycling**.

We want to **increase the infrastructure** to do so.

We can help you as a **partner** if your municipality is interested in promoting the increased recycling of plastic bags.

