

# *Recycling: The Real Trend for Plastic Bags*

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# Overview

- Progressive Bag Affiliates of ACC
- San Francisco, Oakland, Whole Foods, and Ikea Bans
- Plastics Bags—An environmentally responsible choice
- Recycling-the emerging policy trend
  - California, New York City, Austin, Illinois, Chicago

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- Promotes the responsible use and recycling of plastic bags.
- Recycling toolkit is being used by retailers around the nation to deploy effective recycling solutions in stores.
- For more information, please visit [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org).

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# Drivers

- Leaving a lighter Carbon Footprint on the earth
- Media Coverage
- Ireland's PlasTax
- Because San Francisco did it
- Whole Foods Announcement
- Mis-Information
- Political Ambition

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# Bans Are Mis-reported

- San Francisco banned plastic bags in large stores
  - Use of compostable bags was a goal
  - Paper bags are being used
- Fairfax CA passed ban but withdrawn in voluntary response to litigation
- Whole Foods—reuseables and paper bags
- Despite many proposals, only Malibu, CA has passed a ban

## Plastic Bags—Common Myths

- Myth—Use 12 million barrels of oil
  - Fact—80% of polyethylene made from natural gas in US
- Myth—Plastic bags don't break down in landfill
  - Fact—Generally materials do not break down in landfills. Minor breakdown of organics emits methane gas.

# Boustead Lifecycle Analysis 2008: Results

	<b>Impact Summary of Various Bag Types</b>		
	<b>(Carrying Capacity Equivalent to 1000 Paper Bags)</b>		
	<b>Paper (30% Recycled Fiber)</b>	<b>Compostable Plastic</b>	<b>Polyethylene</b>
Total Energy Usage (MJ)	2622	2070	763
Fossil Fuel Use (kg)	23.2	41.5	14.9
Municipal Solid Waste (kg)	33.9	19.2	7.0
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CO2 Equiv. Tons)	0.08	0.18	0.04
Fresh Water Usage (Gal)	1004	1017	58

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## Plastic Bags—An environmentally responsible choice

- **Reduce**

### Energy Use

- 70% lower than paper
- 63% lower than compostable plastic

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 50% lower than paper
- 77% lower than compostable

Solid Waste and Water use also lower

Source: Boustead, 2008

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## Plastic Bags—An environmentally responsible choice

- **Reuse** by consumers is common
  - 92 percent of consumers reuse plastic bags
    - Lunch bags
    - Small trash can liner
    - Auto litter bags
    - Pet pickup

# Plastic Bags—An environmentally responsible choice

## Recycle

- Over 812 million pounds of bags and film recycled annually and growing
- In-store recycling of bags facilitates collection of other bags and film
  - Dry cleaning bags
  - Newspaper bags
  - Paper towel & other film wrap
  - Clean produce bags
  - In store film

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## The online resource for plastic bag and film recycling



### Consumers ▶

In this section you will find general information about plastic bag recycling including what material is readily recyclable as well as a list of retailers that offer plastic bag recycling.

[» Learn More](#)

### Businesses ▶

In this section you will find a comprehensive guide to plastic film and bag recovery. You can find specific information such as plastic film types, recyclers, and how to calculate the economics of recovery.

[» Get Started](#)

### Recycling Coordinators ▶

Since plastic bags and film are a relatively new recycling commodity, many businesses and recyclers are not yet aware of the option and opportunities to recover it. More information in the marketplace may facilitate recovery programs.

[» Tips for Increasing Film Recovery](#)

### Recyclers ▶

Let businesses and other commercial generators of plastic scrap film know about your services by listing in our directory. For information about how to set up a recovery program go to the business section.

[» List Information](#)

### Retailers ▶

Consumers are increasingly asking where they can recycle their plastic bags. Grocers and Retailers can help through education, providing recycling bins in convenient locations, and listing in our directory.

[» Learn More & List Your Store](#)

### Sponsors & Partners ▶

Learn about other organizations that support plastic bag and film recycling.

[» Learn More](#)



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# Plastic Bag Recycling Awareness

Poster &  
Bin w/signage



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## Recycling Solutions:

The “Bring It Back” Model, as used here .

- A single unifying symbol that is used to convey a simple message to consumers.
- Ensures consistency and reinforcement of the message across multiple geographies, multiple stores, etc.
- Educates consumers and drives behavioral change.



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# Recycling is the Trend

## Legislation passed with Industry Support

- California's AB 2449
- New York City Plastic Bag Recycling Law
- Suffolk County Plastic Bag Recycling Ordinance
- Westchester County Plastic Bag Recycling Ordinance
- Chicago, IL Bag Recycling Proposal
- Austin, TX Reduce, Reuse, Recycling Pilot Program
- Phoenix, AZ
- Delaware's Proposed Plastic Bag Recycling Law
- North Carolina's Proposed Recycling Law

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# Recycling is the Trend

- Hawaii-ban proposal replaced with recycling
- Phoenix, AZ new voluntary in-store program
- Chicago—New York City law being considered
- Tempe, AZ stepping up their public education efforts
- Austin TX
- Bakersfield, CA looking at expanding in-store recycling to include curbside and other initiatives.
- Philadelphia considered ban but is implementing voluntary recycling

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# Plastic Bag Recycling. . .The Practical Solution

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