



## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Agenda

Wednesday, February 22, 2012

4:00 pm

Madison Avenue Meeting Room  
500 SW Madison

#### Discussion/**Possible Action**

I. Single-Use Plastic Bag Reduction  
(Attachment)

#### Information

II. Other Business

#### **Next Scheduled Meeting**

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at 4:00 pm

Madison Avenue Meeting Room, 500 SW Madison Ave

#### **Agenda**

Second Quarter Operating Report

Visit Corvallis Second Quarter Report

Municipal Code Review: Chapter 7.04, "Alarm Control"

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Administrative Services Committee

FROM: Mary Steckel, Interim Public Works Director 

DATE: February 9, 2012

SUBJECT: Process Update for Addressing Single-use Plastic Bags

### ISSUE

The Administrative Services Committee requested a report of work to date on the process to reduce the use of single-use plastic checkout bags.

### DISCUSSION

#### Initial Work Session

On January 10, City staff facilitated the first in a series of meetings to identify options to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags in Corvallis. Participants included parties involved in drafting the ordinance presented at the November 7 Council meeting—Debra Higbee-Sudyka of the Sierra Club and Joe Gilliam of the Northwest Grocers Association—as well as Marcy Eastham of the Corvallis Chamber of Commerce. The meeting resulted in agreement on the scope of the reduction (i.e., which plastic bags would be targeted), common definitions for key words (see Attachment A), and three options to explore more thoroughly in subsequent work sessions:

- Scope: Reduce from all retail locations single-use plastic (natural and synthetic) carryout bags that are provided at point of sale and that are less than 2.25 millimeters thick.
- Options:
  1. Ban on plastic bags with a pass-through fee on paper bags. The fee would stay with the retailer to offset the cost of shifting to paper. The pass-through fee would not be required for businesses with fewer than 25 employees.
  2. Pass-through fee on plastic and paper bags. Retailers and consumers would still have the choice of paper or plastic. The fee would stay with the retailer, but would not be required for businesses with fewer than 25 employees.
  3. Voluntary education of and by retailers about the plastic problem to encourage use of reusable bags. Details of this option, such as who would lead the effort, were not fleshed out.

The group also discussed improving recycling options for plastic bags. Because recycling does not meet the Council goal of reducing the use of plastic bags, it was not pursued but may be considered as a complementary program to one of the above options.

#### February 1, 2012 Stakeholder Meeting

Attendees included representatives from the Northwest Grocery Association (NWGA), Corvallis Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), Corvallis Independent Business Alliance (CIBA), the Downtown Corvallis Association (DCA), Environment Oregon, Oregon Surfrider Foundation, and the Sierra Club. See Attachment B for a description of staff's outreach efforts before the meeting and Attachment C for a complete list of attendees.

Staff started the meeting by reviewing the scope and options agreed upon at the January 10 meeting, as well as reviewing some definitions fleshed out based on that discussion. The bulk of the meeting was then spent developing the options by refining the language, discussing pros and cons, and identifying additional questions. The group did not suggest any additional options.

It became clear early in the meeting that, while many people have opinions about plastic bags, the impact a ban or fee would have on Corvallis retailers—especially small ones—was unknown. The limited feedback received from the business community to date ranged from strong support for a ban to opposition to any legislation in principle and concern that customers might boycott stores that

raised issues about a ban. In addition, there appeared to be significant variation among businesses regarding the types of bags used.

Therefore, key questions that emerged from the meeting include:

- How to gather more information from the retailers? Meeting participants agreed that a survey would be useful, and the representatives from Environment Oregon volunteered to draft one. However, introducing a survey could delay the timeline established for the plastic bag process. Staff proposes the process continue in parallel with the possible survey.
- How much would it cost retailers to implement Option 1 or 2?
- What thickness of bags should be targeted? The original scope named bags less than 2.25 millimeters thick because they are not considered reusable, but it is difficult to identify whether a bag meets that criteria. This creates an enforcement problem.
- How to define small business? The working definition is one with less than 25 employees, but how is this determined—by headcount or FTE; total payroll or average over a year?
- If small businesses are excluded from some requirements, what percentage of the total business community would be affected? Would this be an enforcement problem?
- What would the fee be for paper and plastic bags if Option 1 or 2 is chosen?
- How would a ban or fee be enforced? The meeting did not get into this question in depth because the main purpose was to solicit information on impact from the retail community.

Staff also is concerned that the retail establishments that would likely be most affected by possible City legislation have not participated in the meetings to date. Despite the outreach conducted by the City, no individual retailers came to the February 1 meeting.

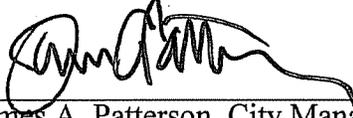
#### NEXT STEPS

To increase outreach, staff is creating a page on the City's Web site to provide background on the plastic bag issue, meeting minutes, compiled feedback (e.g., Council email) and other information as it arises, such as the business survey. Staff plans to have the page live by February 17 and will issue a press release to direct businesses and the public to it.

For the next stakeholder meeting scheduled for February 29, staff will seek participation from a broader spectrum of retailers so they can react to the proposed options, help develop comprehensive pros and cons, and come to a common understanding of the definitions included in the scope and options being discussed.

Council provides input on the actions taken to date and direction on what other information would be germane to its making a decision on the plastic bag issue.

Review and concur:



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James A. Patterson, City Manager

## Attachment A: Working Definitions

Plastic: Any of a group of synthetic or natural organic materials that may be shaped when soft and then hardened (generally heated, then cooled).

Retail establishment: Any store or vendor—except those where the primary business is the preparation or food or drink—located within or doing business within the geographical limits of the City of Corvallis that sells or offers for sale goods at retail.

Carryout / checkout bag: Any bag that is provided by a retail establishment at the point of sale to a customer for use to transport or carry away purchases from the retail establishment. This definition does not include:

- Bags used by customers inside the retail establishment to:
  - Package bulk items, such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candy or small hardware items;
  - Contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, fish, whether packaged or not;
  - Contain or wrap flowers, potted plants, or other items where dampness may be a problem;
  - Contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods.
- Pharmacy prescription bags.
- Newspaper bags, door-hanger bags, laundry dry cleaning bags, or bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste, or yard waste bags.
- Product bags.
- Reusable bags.

Reusable bag: A bag with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of:

- Cloth or other machine-washable fabric; or
- Durable plastic that is at least 2.25 millimeters thick.

## Attachment B: Outreach Efforts for Stakeholder Meetings

Per the timeline that staff developed for the plastic bag process, participants in the February 1 meeting were to include stakeholders who would be directly affected by the effort to reduce the use of plastic bags (e.g., retail businesses) and external organizations with expertise on the subject. Staff conferred with leaders of the Northwest Grocery Association (NWGA), Corvallis Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), Corvallis Independent Business Alliance (CIBA), and Downtown Corvallis Association (DCA), all of whom agreed to represent their member businesses at upcoming meetings. Joe Gilliam of NWGA volunteered to contact food retailers that are not members of NWGA or Corvallis retail networks. In addition, staff contacted the Oregon Neighborhood Store Association, which represents the convenience retail industry. Executive Director Richard Kosesan agreed to be the information channel for Corvallis convenience stores.

Staff then reviewed the memberships of the above organizations to determine which Corvallis retailers were not represented and would need to be contacted by City staff, as opposed to being informed by membership organizations. A list was developed and letters were sent inviting those retailers to attend one or both of the February stakeholder meetings.

External organizations with expertise on the subject included the Oregon Surfrider Foundation, which assisted with the draft ordinance that was presented to the Council in November; Environment Oregon, which does research and advocacy on the plastic bag issue; and the Audubon Society of Corvallis. In addition, staff contacted Tim Shestek, Director of State Affairs for the American Chemistry Council (ACC). Mr. Shestek responded that the ACC no longer represents bag makers on these types of issues and forwarded the invitation to Mark Daniels, an executive at South Carolina-based plastic bag manufacturer Hilex-Poly.

Because the scope agreed upon in the January 10 meeting included natural as well as synthetic plastic bags, staff invited Chris Vitello of EcNow Tech, a local company that has developed a compostable bag. To address questions about composting and recycling, staff invited Allied Waste.

The following individuals were invited to the February 1 stakeholder meeting:

Mark Daniels	Hilex-Poly
Marcy Eastham	Corvallis Chamber of Commerce
John Gaylord	Audubon Society of Corvallis
Joe Gilliam	Northwest Grocery Association
Debra Higbee-Sudyka	Mary's Peak Sierra Club
Julie Jackson	Allied Waste
Richard Kosesan	Oregon Neighborhood Store Association
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The following retail businesses, which are not represented by NWGA, CIBA, DCA, or the Chamber, also were sent letters of invitation:

AutoZone	Maurices
Bed, Bath & Beyond	Michael's Arts & Crafts
Creative Crafts & Frame Shop	Office Max
Dollar Tree - Circle Blvd	Petco
Dollar Tree - Philomath Blvd	Ross Dress for Less
Fashion Bug	T. J. Maxx
Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft	Trumps Hobbies
Kmart	Tuesday Morning
Knecht's Auto Parts	

Attachment C: Attendance at February 1, 2012 Stakeholder Meeting

Marcy Eastham  
Joe Gilliam  
Debra Higbee-Sudyka  
Sarah Higginbotham  
Rebecca Landis  
Kate Lindburg  
Louise Marquering  
Dave Mathews  
Charlie Plybon  
Marge Stevens  
Joan Wessell  
Hugh White

Corvallis Chamber of Commerce  
Northwest Grocery Association  
Mary's Peak Sierra Club  
Environment Oregon  
Farmers' Market  
Corvallis Independent Business Alliance  
citizen  
Environment Oregon  
Oregon Surfrider Foundation  
citizen (Master Recycler)  
Downtown Corvallis Association  
citizen

City Staff

Mary Steckel  
Kris DeJong  
Linda Lovett  
Adam Steele  
Scott Dybvad

Interim Public Works Director  
Interim Administrative Division Manager  
Sustainability Supervisor  
Franchise Utilities Specialist  
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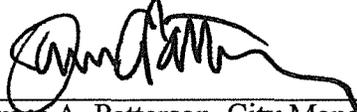
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Louise Marquering	citizen
Dave Mathews	Environment Oregon
Charlie Plybon	Oregon Surfrider Foundation
Marge Stevens	citizen (Master Recycler)
Joan Wessell	Downtown Corvallis Association
Hugh White	citizen

City Staff

Mary Steckel	Interim Public Works Director
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Linda Lovett	Sustainability Supervisor
Adam Steele	Franchise Utilities Specialist
Scott Dybvad	Sustainability Program Specialist

Louie, Kathy

Attachment A

To: joel hirsch  
Subject: RE: plastics

Kathy,

If it is not too late for ASC today, please include the below email from Craig Cirello of Cirello's Pizza.

Sorry I forgot to forward this earlier.

Joel

> Date: Fri, 20 Jan 2012 12:34:00 -0800

> From: [craig@](#)

> To: [joelhirsch](#)

> Subject: Re: plastics

>

> Joel, Here's my 2 cents. Since there are 2 sides to the coin. My vote

> is to eliminate plastics. Corvallis/ Benton County leans toward

> 'green'. Eliminating plastic bags fits the image well. The sides of

> the coin can be debated until the cows come home. Choosing what appears

> to be the green side fits the communities M. O. So my vote goes to be

> the green side. This stems from Corvallis being progressive and merges

> well with the direction a lot of caring folks in town are working

> toward. I understand there are a lot of folks who wouldn't like it and

> would be disgusted with the choice. But I feel the shoe fits us in this

> decision.

>

> All that said.....good luck with your decision. I know you put a

> lot of educated thought into such matters. Whatever you decide I'll

> respect your choice. Cirello

Louie, Kathy

Attachment B

To: Ward 8  
Subject: RE: <web>Plastic bag ban...

FYI for the record.  
Biff

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: orstater@  
To: ward8@council.ci.corvallis.or.us  
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2012 2:36:04 PM  
Subject: <web>Plastic bag ban...

This is an inquiry e-mail via Contact Us form:  
Richard  
prefer phone contact: no

As a longtime citizen of Corvallis, graduate of Oregon State University, and working citizen of Corvallis, I'm asking that the city keep it's business to running the city and NOT regulating what we as citizen's use to carry out groceries home in or with. I am tired of different cities regulating whether we use paper, cloth, or plastic bags it really isn't any of your business or concern! I personally like using and REUSING and REUSING, and REUSING, the plastic bags I get from the grocery store. They hold up better going from the store to my car then to my house without falling apart during the process. I DO NOT believe it's city or national governments responsibility to regulate my decision of using a plastic bag or not! Get OUT of our daily lives and do the job that we as citizens elected you to do!

Attachment C (c1)

**Banning Plastic bags is based on unfortunate premises and has serious unintended consequences with negligible environmental benefit.**

Submitted by Bruce Harmon, Corvallis Oregon 541-754-7613

I am here as a concerned resident of this community. My business is consulting to various railroad and airline companies. I am also representing the Downtown Corvallis Association as a proxy, since Joan Wessell is unable to attend today.

My late mother, when she was in her 80s and 90s and quite frail, found she could carry her groceries more easily when with plastic bags rather than paper sacks because they are the right size, didn't tear, and the handles made them safer and easier for carrying groceries. She liked them and said they were a "godsend" for her. I listened to my mother. She would say now, "This idea of a ban goes too far."

My wife and I also shop in grocery stores that provide plastic bags. We find them extremely convenient and see fundamental flaws in the idea of any ban of plastic bags.

I became concerned with what appears to be an emotional and poorly informed decision that could be made in Corvallis about the availability of plastic bags, an important innovation that makes peoples lives better.

So I did some basic research. One place I looked is the American Progressive Bag Alliance. I also called other experts on this issue in Washington DC. I also looked at several videos from proponents of banning these bags. I would suggest that the members of this committee look into this as I did.

A. Here are some factual results of research by different organizations.

1. Plastic bags are not "single use" — 90% of Americans reuse their plastic bags.
2. They are cheap, very useful and made in the United States.
3. Plastic grocery bags are polyethylene, most are made from 75% natural gas and 25% recycled bags.
4. Plastic grocery bags make up less than 0.5% of the solid waste stream
5. Much is already being done about plastic bags. They are 100% recyclable; one company, Hilex Poly, has 30,000 recycling points in the U.S.
6. Nationwide, 14.7% of bags and wraps were recycled in 2010 – that's 971 million lbs, up 60% from 2005. That recycling rate is increasing every day.
7. It takes 91% less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than to recycle a pound of paper.
8. For every 7 trucks needed to deliver paper bags, only 1 truck is needed for plastic bags.
9. 100% of plastic bags can be made into a multitude of useful new products: such as building products, fencing, decking, pipe, playground equipment and new bags.
- 10. Multi-use grocery "Tote" bags also carry lots of things that can make us sick, including dangerous eColi, other bacteria, and lead.**
11. For example, half of randomly sampled tote bags were found to have toxins, such as lead and bacteria, above safe levels by 300%.
12. Tote bags are usually polypropylene, not made in US, but made overseas from oil.

13. Storing tote bags in the trunk of your car helps bacteria grow rapidly.
14. These “multi-use” tote bags also go to the landfill and are not easily recycled.
15. Plastic film and bags protect our food from external contaminants such as germs and harmful bacteria, and keep food fresh.

B. Most importantly: This is about consumer freedom — Please do not take away, tax or otherwise diminish this amazingly useful, nearly sterile item that actually makes our lives easier and safer.

**It is not the role of government to deprive people of their choices or to reduce their use of anything such as safe, clean and useful plastic bags.** Corvallis is full of very intelligent and well-educated people. Let them decide how they want to shop, not the city council.

C. And finally, plastic bags do not cause litter, people do. Plastic bags make up a miniscule portion of discarded debris. Banning them or any other disposable item in Corvallis would have virtually zero effect on the environment. So we should try to educate the public about recycling plastic bags and other disposable materials, just as everyone has been doing at an increasing rate for years.

## Could a plastic bag ban stop people from being trashy?

CORPUS CHRISTI — Littering the landscape with plastic shopping bags is indeed a problem. The proposed solution — banning them — doesn't address the problem at its source, which is the people doing the littering. A bag ban only removes bags from their arsenal, much like a ban on so-called "assault" rifles can change the cosmetics of a law-abiding gun owner's home arsenal.

For an inanimate object, the plastic bag, like the assault rifle, has attained quite a reputation for villainy. Truth is, its penchant for premeditated environmental depredation is overblown. Lift an empty one to appreciate the tininess of its footprint compared to a paper bag or a Prius. The green reputation of those two products overlooks their manufacture, which does much heavier environmental damage than the manufacture of plastic bags.

Improperly discarded plastic bags make an unsightly spectacle of the landscape, which more easily camouflages other litter such as plastic drink bottles, plastic foam cups and cigarette butts that fly easily out of car and truck windows. The bags' environmental impact is smaller than their visual statement. Also, we tend to remember our outrage at the sight of those bags caught in trees and brush more readily than we remember how useful they are when used properly.

The ones that come back from the grocery store make it safely into the house, where they are reused as budget trash can liners, lunch bags and pet poop picker uppers. In the home environment the bags usually are disposed of safely in a trash can or — better — the recyclables bin. We have no idea how many bags can be wadded and stuffed into one bag for storage or recycling. We just know it's a lot.

Plastic bags from a convenience store or fast food restaurant are much more likely to end up as litter, which is no reason to ban convenience stores or fast food restaurants.

Plastic bags make a minuscule dent in landfill space and, according to a 2009 Wall Street Journal article, were found to be only a tiny fraction of the street litter in San Francisco, less pervasive than chewing gum and cigarette butts.

The heavily touted alternatives, paper bags and reusable shopping bags, pose their own problems. Paper bags are more costly and less environmental to manufacture, and aren't as strong as plastic — especially when wet. A joint study by the University of Arizona and Loma Linda University in California found that reusable grocery bags tended to harbor dangerous germs and that most users weren't aware that the bags needed to be washed to prevent this problem.

That doesn't negate the reusable bags as a solution. Preventing the germ problem by washing the bags is easy enough.

The local Surfrider Foundation promoted reusable bags at the Jan. 31 City Council meeting, also urging a plastic bag ban. The council is scheduled to discuss a ban at its Feb. 21 meeting.

While we share the sentiment that inspired the call for a ban, bags don't litter, people do. But since the bags, unlike guns, have no Second Amendment protection, maybe we'll find out whether a bag ban will solve Corpus Christi's trashy people problem.

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# Plastic Bag Bans 'Present Hidden Environmental, Economic Costs'

February 7, 2012

Plastic bag bans incur hidden economic and environmental costs that are "virtually ignored," according to conservative think tank the National Center for Policy Analysis.

More than two dozen cities – including Seattle and San Francisco – have enacted bans or imposed fees for using such bags, but anecdotal evidence suggests that curbs on plastic bags has affected commerce in the cities where such laws have been enacted, according to a column by NCPA senior fellow H. Sterling Burnett on Waste & Recycling news' web site.

In the current economic conditions the use of plastic bags could save U.S. jobs, according to Burnett. China is the world's largest manufacturer of reusable bags, while nearly all plastic bags are made on American soil. Bag bans could then be "handing China control of yet another industry" while threatening U.S. jobs, according to Burnett.

Evidence also suggests that, without appropriate care, reusable bags can be a breeding ground for bacteria.

Burnett also argues that plastic bags – regularly referred to as "single-use" – are rarely used just one time. Bags are regularly used as trash bags, lunch bags and for picking up pet waste, Burnett says. If easy access to plastic bags is curbed it will only lead to increased sales of trash bags and baggies, he argues.

However, according to Plastics Today, there is likely to be an increase in bans and curbs on bag use in 2012 – San Francisco is currently looking to extend its partial ban on single use bags. According to a piece on the Science 2.0 web site, while outright bans may not be a perfect solution, they do offer a "useful way to begin reducing waste pollution."

**Environmental Leader**

Environmental Management & Energy News

## **Austin bag ban pushed with faulty numbers; author of cited report says it did not address plastic bags, 'a minute portion of the waste stream'**

Wednesday, Jan 11, 2012, 05:26PM CST By Mark Lisher

City of Austin officials wildly inflated the volume of plastic bags in Austin's litter stream and the cost to dispose of them, based on a misreading of a key report cited by the officials, one of the authors of the report told Texas Watchdog this afternoon.

It was unclear how the error, an extrapolation more than three-and-a-half times larger than it should have been, will affect a proposed ordinance that would make offering disposable shopping bags of plastic or paper a misdemeanor in Austin beginning in January of 2013.

The city's Solid Waste Advisory Commission is expected to consider the ordinance at 6:30 p.m. tonight in Austin's City Hall. Should an ordinance be approved, the City Council is expected to vote on it sometime in March.

As of 4 p.m. Bob Gedert, director of Austin Resource Recovery, was unable to respond to Texas Watchdog's questions about the calculation he used in the report upon which the disposable bag ban is based. He was, however, expected to address them at the commission meeting, his spokeswoman, Lauren Hammond, said.

The reason Gedert could not make an estimate of plastic bag volume or cost in Austin based on the report he cited was the figure for plastic bag volume in the U.S. was not in the report, Steven Stein, an environmental scientist and co-author of the 2009 study of litter in the U.S., told Texas Watchdog.

The Keep America Beautiful litter study listed the top 10 sources of visible litter on American roadways. Cigarette butts were responsible for 36.3 percent of the litter. Plastic bags, at .6 percent did not make the top 10 list or the study, Stein said.

"We had, like, 60 categories, and we weren't going to include them all," Stein said. "Because plastic bags made up such a minute portion of the waste stream we didn't include it."

In his report to the City Council in January of 2011, Gedert cites Stein's study and uses a 2.2 percent figure, which corresponds to a type of litter Stein called Other Plastic Film. This category refers to agricultural plastic like the sheeting wrapped around big round bales of hay.

"That's the only place I can think of where he might have gotten the 2.2 percent," Stein said.

On Tuesday, Stein sent an e-mail letter to Gedert pointing out the error.

"You have overstated the amount and cost impact of plastic bags by about 366 percent," Stein wrote. "Additionally, since retail plastic bags only constitute a portion of the study's plastic bag category (dry cleaner bags and trash bags are also in this category), even 0.6 percent for retail plastic bags is an overstatement."

"Specifically, page three of your memo indicates that plastic bags constitute 2.2 percent of litter. The 2009 National Litter Study found that plastic bags of all types comprise only 0.6 percent of litter. Percentages for categories that constituted minute portions of roadside litter, such as plastic bags, were not addressed in the 2009 National Litter Study."

"Thus, the wrong data point was used in this memo's analysis. The mix-up may stem from Figure 3-3 (Top 10 Aggregate Litter Items, All U.S. Roadways) on page 3-3 of the KAB 2009 National Litter Study. That table lists "Other Plastic Film" as 2.2% of all litter. Note that this category specifically excluded plastic bags."

Stein said he has so far not heard from Gedert, before or after his letter.

"Regardless of this position you take on this issue, what is of consequence is that you dig deep enough to make sure you have the correct data to base your assumptions on," Stein said. "I think it was an honest mistake that I would have been happy to point out to him. But I think the public in Austin ought to know about it."

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Contact Mark Lisher at 512-299-2318 or [mark@texaswatchdog.org](mailto:mark@texaswatchdog.org) or on Twitter at [@marktxwatchdog](https://twitter.com/marktxwatchdog).

## Plastic Bag Bans Hurt Shoppers, Retailers and Workers

Posted on January 19, 2012

By H. Sterling Burnett, Ph.D. January 19, 2012, Exclusive for JunkScience.com

A small but increasing number of cities are in a frenzy to ban plastic shopping bags. More than two dozen cities nationwide have either banned plastic grocery bags (and in some cases, paper bags) entirely, or have imposed a fee for using them in order to encourage the use of reusable bags. However, such policies have hidden costs few seem to recognize.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that cities with bag bans have lost commerce, while surrounding cities and neighborhoods benefit as shoppers choose to go elsewhere.

This is consumer choice – most people prefer the plastic bag option for their convenience, flexibility, strength and other obvious reasons.

Many consumers use plastic bags at home. They can be used to line bathroom trash bins, collect Fido's waste and Kitty's cat litter, to securely seal the baby's soiled diapers, and more. I use them to carry donation items, transport dry cleaning and for storage in my garage and attic. Without them, we will likely buy more trash bags and baggies to compensate. As to recycling, it is increasing. Bag bans will reduce the motivation for those recycling efforts.

The reusable bags that are being pushed as an alternative to paper or plastic in locales across the nation have other, rarely considered, drawbacks. On the economic front, China is the leading manufacturer of reusable bags, while plastic bags are made in the U.S. with the industry employing thousands of workers. Thus, cities banning plastic bags are helping China take over one more industry while putting American workers in the unemployment line.

There are also health concerns associated with reusable bags and these problems are already making people sick. When used to carry meats, poultry or fish, blood and other fluids can soak into the reusable bags. If not cleaned regularly and stored properly, bacteria – including e-coli — can take up residence and mold can form. Continued use can contaminate the users own food and even the food of others as the contaminated reusable bags come into contact with the grocery conveyor belt. It's true that reusable bags can be washed, but doing so shortens their useful life considerably.

Sadly, much of the push to ban plastic retail bags is based on false or misreported data.

Ban proponents claim that plastic bags are rarely used more than once and that they make up a large portion of landfill content litter on roadways. In Austin, the city council seems to be particularly influenced by a presentation from Bob Gedert, director of city department Austin Resource Recovery, in which he stated that plastic bags comprise 2.2 percent of the city's litter. Gedert cited a study whose lead author was Steven Stein as the source for his claim.

However, Stein's study never said that. In fact Gedert exaggerates the percentage of plastic bag litter by 366 percent. What Stein's actually found was that plastic bag litter comprised only 0.6 percent of litter volume, not the 2.2 percent claimed by Gedert. Stein asked Gedert to make a correction. Even the 0.6 percent figure is high since it includes other types of plastic waste, such as industrial wrapping, dry cleaner and trash bags. Indeed, the national 2009 Keep America Beautiful study does not even include plastic bags in its top ten sources of litter.

Bad data makes bad policy. In this case, the evidence shows that plastic bags are a miniscule waste problem and that every city that bans plastic bags costs its shoppers, businesses, the city government and workers across the nation with little or no benefit for the environment or economy.

*H. Sterling Burnett, Ph.D. is a senior fellow with the [National Center for Policy Analysis](#), a non-partisan, non-profit research institute with offices in Dallas, Texas and Washington, D.C.*

## The Irish Bag Tax: Early Case Study Exposes Misguided Policy

In March 2002, the Republic of Ireland instituted a tax on plastic bags in which retailers charged their customers 15 Euro cents (about 17 U.S. cents) for every shopping bag purchased. Now four years later, the Irish bag tax, which was supposedly passed in an effort to curb litter, has actually proved to be a disaster on several fronts. Unfortunately, it was hailed by environmentalists and others and quickly spawned the consideration of similar legislation by governments in Australia, Bangladesh, South Africa, and the United States. Scotland is currently considering a tax on retail plastic bags, but the Scottish Parliament's environmental committee rejected the idea as unworkable in October 2006. A full parliamentary decision on the policy is anticipated by 2007.

The four-year experience of Ireland's bag tax has shown that the policy is not only worse for the environment, but causes other social problems as well:

- Where customers have been driven to use paper bags, it is now common for double or triple-bagging to take place to overcome the inferior strength of paper compared with plastic. This means, at least twice the numbers of paper bags are being used than plastic bags had been used. This leads to huge increases in the number of shipments and truckloads needed to transport paper bags.
- There is also clear evidence in Ireland of a switch to paper bag substitutes which consume eight times the raw material, three times the energy, create twice the levels of air pollution, waste fifty times as much process water, have six times the weight and ten times the volume.
- The Irish bag tax has caused a switch to heavier, bulkier alternatives which will degrade or decompose to produce greenhouse gases.
- There is no evidence offered (unsurprisingly given the fact that plastic carrier bags are less than 1% of litter) that litter has reduced in the Republic of Ireland since the introduction of a plastic bag tax.
- The Irish bag tax actually has invited more shoplifting to occur. Because plastic bags are normally only offered and used during or after payment has been received, it provides the most effective visual evidence of payment for goods. In Ireland, where customers were driven to bring their own shopping bags into stores, this has made the theft of goods from the shelf far easier as well as costing every small grocery shop in Ireland an average of 5,400 Euros per annum in stolen and/or abandoned wire baskets and trolleys (metal containers).
- These metal containers have far greater environmental impacts during production, shipment, eventual disposal, etc. and are a far greater visual problem when abandoned into the local environment than plastic bags.
- Research shows that since the bag tax was introduced in Ireland, there has been little significant reduction (if at all) in the tonnage of plastic bags of all types used in that country.

Experience in the Republic of Ireland indicates that the usage of plastic carrier bags has declined by in excess of 90% - but the residual funds (est. 10 million Euros) generated by the remaining 10% of those prepared to pay for carrier bags is estimated to be far less than the cost borne by the authorities in administering the program and is certainly less than the increased cost of theft to retailers as stated by RGDATA (Irish Grocers' Association) and in other published reports.

Encourage plastic recycling – in combined recycling pickup each week.

*From the Progressive Bag Alliance and my own research*

## **TOP 10 MYTHS ABOUT PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS**

**Paper grocery bags are a better environmental choice than plastic bags.**

Plastic bags are 100% recyclable and for all environmental impacts related to air emissions, water emissions and solid waste – those of paper bags are significantly greater than that of plastic grocery bags:

- Plastic bags use 40% less energy to produce and generate 80% less solid waste than paper.
- Paper bags generate 70% more emissions, and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags.
- Even paper bags made from 100% recycled fiber use more fossil fuels than plastic bags.

**Plastic bags are the largest component of landfills and the primary component of litter.**

The item most frequently encountered in landfills is paper—on average, it accounts for more than 40% of a landfill's contents. Cigarette butts, chewing gum, and candy wrappers account for about 95% of all litter in the English-speaking world. Education, as well as responsible use and disposal of all materials and products, is the key to reducing litter.

**Plastic grocery bags take 1,000 years to decompose in landfills.**

Virtually nothing – not paper, food, plastic or even compostable or biodegradable products – decompose in today's landfills, because they are actually designed to be as stable and dry as possible. Research by William Rathje, who runs the Garbage Project, has shown that when excavated from a landfill, newspapers from the 1960s can be intact and readable.

**Plastic bags feed America's addiction to oil.**

Although they are usually made from natural gas, some are made from oil. Plastic bags are extraordinarily energy-efficient to manufacture.

**Compostable bags can degrade in backyard composts.**

In order to breakdown, compostable bags must be sent to an industrial composting facility, not backyard piles or municipal composting centers. There are few of these facilities in the U.S. and where these facilities are not available, compostable bags will sit in landfills because they can't be recycled.

**For people who live near water, paper bags are the environmentally friendly choice to protect marine wildlife.**

Since paper bag production has more negative environmental impacts related to air emissions, water emissions and solid waste than plastic grocery bags, they're not a solution. Recycling and proper disposal of all products would make sure that any threat to the environment, including wildlife, would be reduced.

**Low recycling rates for plastic bags prove recycling them doesn't work.**

Recycling does work. The problem is not everyone knows that plastic grocery bags are 100% recyclable and not everyone has access to plastic bag recycling in their community.

**Recycling plastic bags is too expensive.**

The price of not recycling them is high. Recycling can help save resources and minimize the amount of waste going to landfills. Also, recycling helps reduce litter, as bags are contained and stored. Its worth noting that it takes 91% less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than it takes to recycle a pound of paper.

**There's no demand for recycled plastic.**

Today there is a growing market for recycled plastic that didn't exist 15 years ago. It's also cheaper now to use recycled plastic than to obtain new materials. Recycled plastic grocery and shopping bags are currently being made into new consumer products such as clean new plastic shopping bags, outdoor decking, playground equipment, pipe and many other products.

**There is a Texas-sized garbage patch in the ocean.**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has examined and identified garbage in the oceans. There is no garbage patch in ocean the size of Texas. The amount of plastic is difficult to measure or predict and cannot be seen by satellite.

*Bruce Harmon, Corvallis, Oregon*

## Single-use Checkout Plastic Bag Survey *Attachment D*

The following questions will help us understand the needs of small businesses in Corvallis regarding single-use plastic checkout bags. The results of this survey will be submitted to the Corvallis City Council.

	Question	Yes	No	Further Information?
1.	<b>Does your business use single-use plastic checkout bags?</b>			
2.	<b>Are you aware that plastic bags that are minimum plastic thickness of 2.25 mils are not included in the ban?</b> Note: the ordinance also exempts other single-use bags, such as newspaper bags, bags used to take out food from restaurants, pharmacy and produce bags.			
3.	<b>Do you support the 5-cent pass through cost to incentivize the switch to reusable bags, and to help retailers defray their costs?</b> Note: Fred Meyer found that when plastic checkout bags are gone, shoppers overwhelmingly turn to paper; hence the problem switches from one disposable bag to another.			
4.	<b>Did you know that the Corvallis Ordinance stipulates that the 5-cent fee be recorded on sales receipts, similar to all other transactions?</b>			
5.	<b>Did you know that the Ordinance excludes single-use <i>compostable</i> checkout bags?</b> Note: Not all compostable bags are the same, some only compost at high temperatures and some have a percentage of plastic in them. Some also do not break up in ocean water, and continue to pose problems to fish and wildlife. Single use bags of all types are best replaced by reusable bags.			
6.	<b>Did you know that Portland has already banned single-use checkout bags and that Eugene, Lake Oswego and Newport are working on it?</b> Note: Portland's ban covers only large stores. It pertains to retail stores with gross annual sales of \$2,000,000 (\$2 million), or more..." and "Has over 10,000 square feet of retail space that generates sales and has a pharmacy." It also does not include #3 and #5 above.			
7.	<b>Did you know that the Ordinance stipulates that the paper bag: (1) contains no old growth fiber; (2) is 100% recyclable and contains a minimum of 40% postconsumer recycled content; (3) displays the words "Reusable" and "Recyclable" in a highly visible manner on the outside of the bag; and (4) is capable of composting consistent with the ASTM Standard.</b>			
8.	<b>Did you know that hundreds of countries (China, Bangladesh, Spain, France); 200 U.S. cities (San Francisco, Seattle) and counties (LA County) have banned or put significant fees on plastic checkout bags?</b>			
9.	<b>Did you know that single-use plastic bags are the most prevalent consumer item in the world?</b> Note: Single-use checkout bags are an item of convenience, and cutting back on them would make an appreciable difference to the negative effect plastic causes to our oceans and environment.			
10	<b>Did you know that plastic bags are the most problematic and costly material at Recycling Centers?</b> Note: Plastic bags and other film are recyclable at various locations (Allied Waste, First Alternative Co-op and most grocery stores), but must only be recycled in this source- separated manner.			

**PROPOSED PLASTIC BAG ORDINANCE for CORVALLIS**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CORVALLIS ENCOURAGING REUSABLE BAGS  
AND PROHIBITING THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CARRYOUT BAGS**

**Section 1. Findings.**

WHEREAS the city of Corvallis has a duty to protect the natural environment, the economy, and the health of its citizens;

WHEREAS The Corvallis City Council's Community Sustainability Policy includes the goals of using resources efficiently reducing demand for natural resources (such as energy, land, and water) as a first alternative to expanding supply and preventing additional pollution through planned, proactive measures, rather than only corrective action, focusing on solutions rather than symptoms;

WHEREAS The Corvallis City Council has previously expressed support for the Community Sustainability Action Plan, which includes encouraging reusable food bags and restricting plastic bags;

WHEREAS The expansive use of plastic shopping bags and their typical disposal creates an impediment to the city's goals;

WHEREAS Single-use plastic shopping bags are difficult to recycle and frequently contaminate material that is collected through Corvallis' recycling and composting programs. The City recognizes that reusable bags are the best alternative to Single-use plastic shopping bags. Recycled content paper checkout bags are also an alternative, as they are a high value recyclable collected in the City's curbside recycling program and are made in paper mills located in the region. While papermaking has environmental impacts, paper bags that are made with 40 percent or more recycled fiber provide a positive alternative to plastic bags;

WHEREAS Plastic shopping bags create significant litter problems in neighborhoods, on Oregon's beaches, and in sewer systems;

WHEREAS Plastic shopping bags have significant environmental impacts each year; whereas reusable bags are the best option to reduce waste and litter, protect wildlife, and conserve resources;

WHEREAS Governments in several countries and cities in the U.S. have banned or taken action to discourage the use of plastic bags, including Portland, Oregon;

WHEREAS The City has determined that a minimum cost pass-through of \$0.05 per Recycled Paper Bag would cover the reasonable cost to a store of providing the paper

- (B) contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, fish, whether packaged or not;
- (C) contain or wrap flowers, potted plants, or other items where dampness may be a problem;
- (D) contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods; or
- (E) Pharmacy prescription bags;

(2) Newspaper bags, door-hanger bags, laundry-dry cleaning bags, or bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste, or yard waste bags.

(3) Product Bags.

(c) "City Sponsored Event" means any event organized or sponsored by the City of Corvallis or any Department of the City of Corvallis.

(d) "Customer" means any person obtaining goods from a Retail Establishment or a Vendor.

(e) "Food Provider" means any person in the City of Corvallis that provides prepared food for public consumption on or off its premises and includes, without limitation, any store, shop, sales outlet, restaurant, Grocery Store, delicatessen, or catering truck or vehicle.

(f) "Grocery Store" means any Retail Establishment that sells groceries, fresh, packaged, canned, dry, prepared or frozen food or beverage products and similar items and includes supermarkets, convenience stores, and gasoline stations.

(g) "Pharmacy" means a retail use where the profession of pharmacy by a pharmacist licensed by the State of Oregon in accordance with the Business and Professions Code is practiced and where prescription medications are offered for sale.

(h) "Product Bag" means any bag provided to a Customer for use within a Retail Establishment to assist in the collection or transport of products to the point of sale within the Retail Establishment. A Product Bag is not a Carryout Bag.

(i) "Recyclable Paper Bag" means a paper bag that meets all of the following requirements: (1) contains no old growth fiber; (2) is 100% recyclable and contains a minimum of 40% postconsumer recycled content; (3) displays the words "Reusable" and "Recyclable" in a highly visible manner on the outside of the bag; and (4) is capable of composting consistent with the timeline and specifications of the ASTM Standard as defined in this section.

(j) "Retail Establishment" means any store or Vendor located within or doing business within the geographical limits of the City of Corvallis that sells or offers for sale goods at retail.

(k) "Reusable Bag" means a bag made of cloth or other fabric with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for long term multiple reuse and meets all of the following requirements:

(1) has a minimum lifetime of 125 uses, which for purposes of this subsection, means the capability of carrying a minimum of 22 pounds 125 times over a distance of at least 175 feet;

(2) is machine washable; and

(3) if plastic, has a minimum plastic thickness of 2.25 mils.

(l) "Vendor" means any store, shop, restaurant, sales outlet or other commercial establishment located within or doing business within the geographical limits of the City of Corvallis, which provides perishable or nonperishable goods for sale to the public. A Vendor is a Retail Establishment.

(m) "Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bag" means any plastic Carryout Bag made available by a Retail Establishment to a Customer at the point of sale. It does not include Reusable Bags, Recycled Paper Bags, or Product Bags.

demonstrate continued undue hardship if it wishes to have the exemption extended. Extensions may only be granted for intervals not to exceed one year.

(f) An exemption request shall include all information necessary for the Mayor to make his or her decision, including but not limited to documentation showing the factual support for the claimed exemption. The Mayor may require the applicant to provide additional information to permit the Mayor to determine whether the facts support another exemption request.

(g) The Mayor may approve the exemption request, in whole or in part, with or without conditions.

(h) Exemption decisions are effective immediately, are final and are not appealable.

(i) The City Council may by resolution establish a fee for exemption requests. The fee shall be sufficient to cover the costs of processing the exemption request.

(j) Notwithstanding the requirements contained in Sections 4 and 5: Vendors at farmers' markets may distribute Recycled Paper Bags and other non-prohibited carryout devices without charge but are not required to provide or offer carryout devices.

### **Section 7 Remedies.**

(a) The Mayor is authorized to establish regulations and to take any and all actions reasonable and necessary to obtain compliance with this Chapter, including, but not limited to, inspecting any retail establishment's premises to verify compliance.

(b) Any person violating this Chapter shall be punishable by a fine equal to the cost of enforcement. For the purposes of this section, "cost of enforcement" shall mean the number of hours expended by City personnel in investigating and prosecuting the violation, rounded up to the nearest tenth of an hour, multiplied by \$75 per hour.

(c) The City Attorney may also seek legal, injunctive, or other equitable relief to enforce this Chapter.

(d) Administrative enforcement of this ordinance shall proceed pursuant to Corvallis Municipal Code with the fines to be graduated for repeat violations in amounts set forth by City Council resolution.

(e) Each violation of this Chapter shall be considered a separate offense.

(f) The remedies and penalties provided in this section are cumulative and not exclusive, and nothing in this Chapter shall preclude any person from pursuing any other remedies provided by law.

(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Ordinance, commencing on the date the Ordinance becomes effective, this Ordinance may be enforced through any remedy as provided for in this Section. This Ordinance shall be enforced one year from the date of its enactment.

(h) All fines collected pursuant to this Section shall be deposited into the City's general fund; provided, however that the City may designate up to one-half of the fines collected to be spent by the City on community outreach and educational programs which focus on sustainable practices and/or policies.

**Section 8.** The City shall establish a website containing information on this Ordinance. The website must include the following information:

(a) Who is affected by the Ordinance;

(b) What the Ordinance requires;

(c) How the Ordinance is implemented and enforced;

(d) When the Ordinance becomes effective and enforceable;

January 2012

Attachment E

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
501 SW Madison Ave. PO Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

RE: Corvallis Ordinance: "Encourage Reusable Bags and Ban Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bags"

We, the undersigned business in Corvallis support and urge the Corvallis City Council to pass an Ordinance that promotes the use of reusable bags, bans plastic checkout bags and requires retailers to charge for paper checkout bags. Such a policy is needed to reduce waste and encourage people to shop with reusable bags.

Single-use plastic bags represent one of the greatest environmental catastrophes of our generation. Around 100 billion petroleum-based plastic checkout bags are used each year in the United States, requiring an estimated 12 million barrels of oil each year. Sadly, less than 5% of these bags are recycled each year and cities, counties, and non-profit organizations must pay millions of dollars each year to clean up plastic litter.

Further, it is estimated that 60–80% of all debris in the ocean is plastic. Plastics take hundreds of years to break down at sea and most types never truly biodegrade. As a result, marine animals often get entangled in the debris or mistake it for food.

Many other cities, such as Portland and Seattle, and countries throughout the world have taken similar action to eliminate plastic checkout bags and promote the use of reusable bags. It is now time for Oregon to demonstrate similar leadership in support of a sustainable future for all people and our natural environment.

Sincerely,

Name (CEO or owner):

Business:

Address:



*Attachment F*

To: Administrative Services Committee

From: Marys Peak Group – Sierra Club

Date: February 22, 2012

RE: Plastic Bag Ordinance

I appreciate this process of gathering information so that we can write an ordinance that is a win-win for businesses, the environment, and our community. To that end, the Marys Peak Group – Sierra Club has been involved in a business outreach program, where we have contacted 96 businesses in the downtown Corvallis area. From that effort, I am submitting signatures of support from 50 businesses. I've received positive feedback from most of the businesses. This confirms that local businesses understand the importance of reducing single-use plastic waste for the safety of our community and environment. In the business outreach process, we spoke to managers and owners, and gave them information and answered questions. A good percentage of them were not aware of the ordinance, and this outreach served as a good way to introduce them to it and gather information.

The outreach was a great way to learn first-hand that we have a vibrant downtown, with businesses that work hard to serve their customers and their community. We learned that change is happening synergistically from both ends – the customer and the business. Many businesses report that they are already cutting back on plastic bags because their customers are asking for paper, refusing plastic, or leaving with their purchases in hand. And many downtown businesses have taken the initiative to ban plastic bags (i.e. Big River Restaurant, Cyclotopia, Sibling Rivalry, Golden Crane). The First Alternative Co-op was the first to ban them in 2006. They give their patrons a reward in the form of a bean if they bring their reusable bag. To date, the Co-op has given \$38,972 to local non-profits, and saved 779,439 bags! A small clothing store downtown (Resolve) has a similar system, and since they opened 3 months ago, they've given out 1,250 beans for patrons not using plastic bags. These examples show substantial savings and they reveal the possibilities awaiting Corvallis, and the environment, if we as a community commit to this small but important change.

Some of the feedback from businesses point out important issues to solve. For example, some stated they will not charge the fee and want to have that option. Conversely, the 5-cent fee works for others. For example, the Co-op has already implemented a five-cent fee for paper bags on July 2009. They report this has significantly cut down on the number of paper bags they have to order, because they have experienced that "people will do almost anything to avoid that charge." The Co-op's experience

supports the studies that show that a 5-cent fee is enough to change behavior.<sup>1</sup> If we want to cut back on plastic bags, changing people's habits is crucial, and a small reminder of 5-cents is sufficient.

For some select small businesses, banning plastic will be problematic given that they have a smaller profit margin than larger stores, and some are reluctant to charge a 5-cent fee to defray their costs, either because they do not want to upset their customers, or because paper bags cost more for them than larger stores. A way to address this issue was suggested by CIBA. Kate Lindburg suggested that CIBA could buy paper bags in bulk, which would allow the smaller businesses that rely on plastic bags, to defray their costs. Another solution is for a business to ask for an exemption. Other small business owners order a large number of plastic bags, so for them a fee would defray costs. A book store owner told us that he orders 20,000 plastic bags at a time. Many use few plastic bags, so it won't affect them as much. Therefore businesses are affected differently, depending on the type of business and size. To solve these issues is important. However, to address them by exempting all small businesses from banning plastic bags would be problematic (see "Why a Plastic Bag Ban?"). As the paper "Why a Plastic Bag Ban?" points out, banning plastic bags is important because it increases the use of reusable bags, reduces ocean pollution and litter, promotes the use of sustainable alternatives, and saves taxpayer dollars.

We would also like to address the issue of option #3, "Voluntary education program" because it is what we're doing now. Many people are voluntarily cutting back on plastic and bringing in reusable bags. People are more aware of the issue in this community and have cut back on plastic. In addition, the voluntary option delays solving the issue and is not a solution. Many cities<sup>2</sup> begin with a voluntary phase. However, they perform poorly and eventually move to a more serious action. In the case of San Francisco's voluntary program, two problems were presented: stores did not comply, and they could not verify bag-use data. Without a store's buy in, and verifiable bag usage data, any progress toward a goal was not possible. Studies indicate that voluntary, or recycling efforts, do not rise much above 10 percent.<sup>3</sup> Therefore this option does not meet the Council's and the ordinance's objective of cutting back on single-use checkout bags.

By studying the successes and failures of small businesses in Corvallis and the legislative experiences in other cities, we may avoid potential pitfalls and perhaps create an valuable ordinance that will be a model for other communities.

Sincerely,

Debra Higbee-Sudyka  
Vice Chair  
Marys Peak Group – Sierra Club

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<sup>1</sup> "New Study Indicates DC's Bag Fee Very Effective in Changing Behavior," [http://www.sustainableplastics.org/files/documents/AFF%20litter opinion survey%20Press%20Release%20022311%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.sustainableplastics.org/files/documents/AFF%20litter%20opinion%20survey%20Press%20Release%20022311%20FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> "List of Plastic Bag Laws," [http://www.campaignforrecycling.org/our\\_issues/plastic/plastic\\_bags/current\\_laws](http://www.campaignforrecycling.org/our_issues/plastic/plastic_bags/current_laws)

<sup>3</sup> See attached "Plastic Bags – the Recycling Challenge."

# Why a Plastic Bag Ban?

Attachment 6  
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*Banning single-use plastic checkout bags is the most effective and smart policy for reducing impacts on our environment and community. A ban increases the use of reusable bags, reduces ocean pollution and litter, promotes the use of sustainable alternatives, and saves taxpayer dollars.*

## Summary:

- Our dependence on single-use plastic products has devastating effects on the environment. There is no reason something we use for a few minutes should last a few hundred years.
- Banning plastic bags best addresses the problems of single-use plastic bag waste, and most effectively moves consumers to sustainable alternatives.
- Of the bag bans in effect in the US, none have demonstrably hurt consumers or local business, but they have saved consumers, cities, and businesses the expenses incurred from dealing with these products.
- A Corvallis bag ban is the most effective way to address this problem locally and the best step towards a statewide ban in 2013.

## Bag waste is a serious problem than needs an effective solution.

- **Environmental disaster:** From the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and the thousands of marine animals who die each year, plastic bags are wreaking environmental havoc on our ocean systems.<sup>1</sup>
- **Not sustainable:** Plastic checkout bags are made from non-renewable sources. An estimated 100 billion checkout bags made from oil and natural gas are used each year in the United States.<sup>2</sup>
- **Costly nuisance:** Plastic bags jam recycling machinery. The Association of Oregon Recyclers found that even though Plastic Bag Film represents only 0.1% of incoming volumes, 20-30% of labor costs for MRF's in the Portland Metro Area are spent dealing with plastic film.<sup>3</sup>

## Banning bags is the most effective policy option.

- **Studies show:** The City of Palo Alto found that compared to public education campaigns, recycling efforts, and fees, bans most effectively reduce distribution of single-use bags and maximize conversion to reusable bags.<sup>4</sup>
- **Communities embrace bans:** Communities continue to opt for bans after voluntary education or recycling programs prove unsatisfactory: In 2012 San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to expand 2007 bag ban to include all stores.<sup>5</sup>
- **Cleanest standards:** No alternative to a ban offers as cleanly measurable and enforceable standards. None so thoroughly reduce consumption of single-use plastic bags.

## Cities around the globe are choosing a ban as the most preferred policy solution.

- **In the US:** Nearly 40 communities (covered by 19 ordinances) in California have banned the bag, as well as communities in Hawaii, Colorado, Washington, Texas, and elsewhere. Portland passed a ban last year.<sup>6</sup>
- **Globally:** More than 80 national and local governments have taken action against plastic bag waste, including the nations of Italy, India, China, and France. Communities in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Pakistan, and Wales have also passed reforms to reduce plastic bag waste.<sup>7</sup>

## Alternatives to a ban are not viable or effective solutions.

- **Rarely recycled:** According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, less than 5 percent of all single-use checkout plastic bags are actually recycled. Oil and chemical industries promote plastic bag recycling as an alternative, but the industry rarely follows through in a meaningful way.
- **Recycling bags is difficult and dirty:** The costs of doing a curbside recycling program are prohibitive. If plastic bags are actually recycled, they most often are shipped to China or India, leaving a huge overall carbon footprint. Often, foreign countries follow less stringent environmental laws that permit cheap incineration and emit toxic chemicals.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mathews, "Oregon Takes Action: Efforts Across the Globe to Fight Ocean Pollution" 9/2011 Web. <http://environmentoregoncenter.org/reports/orc/oregon-takes-action-efforts-across-globe-fight-ocean-pollution>

<sup>2</sup> Clean Air Council, "Why Plastic Bag Fees Work." 5/2009

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, "Plastic Bags and the MRF" AOR Winter Forum 2010, Web. [http://www.aorr.org/events/forum\\_2009\\_presentations/Chris%20Thomas%20-%20AOR%20Forum%202010%20Presentation.pdf](http://www.aorr.org/events/forum_2009_presentations/Chris%20Thomas%20-%20AOR%20Forum%202010%20Presentation.pdf) accessed 2/15/12

<sup>4</sup> City of Palo Alto, "Plastic bag reduction/reusables enhancement objectives analysis" Attachment F, <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civica/filebank/blobload.asp?BlobID=13927>, accessed 2/15/12

<sup>5</sup> Huffington Post, "San Francisco Plastic Bag Ban Expanded With Unanimous Vote By Board of Supervisors" 2/7/2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/07/san-francisco-plastic-bag\\_n\\_1261327.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/07/san-francisco-plastic-bag_n_1261327.html), accessed 2/15/12

<sup>6</sup> PlasticBagLaws.org; accessed 2/15/12 <http://plasticbaglaws.org/legislation>

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>8</sup> Town of Fairfax "Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance", passed 9/4/2008, [http://plasticbaglaws.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/leg\\_CA\\_Fairfax-](http://plasticbaglaws.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/leg_CA_Fairfax-)

- **Recycling doesn't reduce consumption:** Recycling rates can increase, but the number of plastic bags consumed can increase much faster. [see Figure 1]
- **Voluntary programs perform poorly:** In 2006, California established a program to require collection bins at grocery stores and promote recycling (AB 2449). Local communities seeking stronger measures since 2006 consistently cite lack of recycling as a reason to ban the bag.
- **Conversion technologies don't cut it:** Incinerating bags to generate electricity or converting bags to oil doesn't yield the same environmental benefits, address reduction in litter or increase use of sustainable alternatives.<sup>9</sup>
- **Only a ban gets at the root of the problem:** Recycling bags won't stop bags from blowing into the ocean, storm-drains, or parks, and it won't drive down consumption.

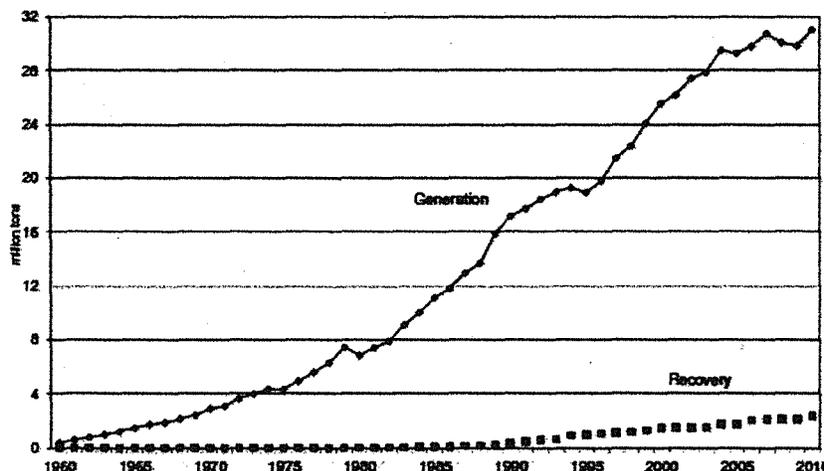
**Support for bans is greater than plastic companies would have you believe:**

- **Costs outweigh the convenience:** LA County staff studying this issue concluded "Although plastic carryout bags are inexpensive and have other useful qualities, they have a propensity to become litter, thus overshadowing these benefits".<sup>10</sup>
- **Consumers appreciate sustainable actions by local business:** When San Francisco considered expanding its ban in 2011, its economic impact report found that "the legislation will have a very slight *positive* impact on the [local] economy".<sup>11</sup>
- **Upheld in the court:** When Marin County's bag ban was challenged, the Superior Court of California ruled that "The ubiquitous thin white bag has moved squarely beyond eyesore into the realm of public nuisance, a symbol of waste and excess and the incremental destruction of nature".<sup>12</sup>
- **Follow the money:** Opposition efforts funded by mega-corporations Exxon Mobil and Dow Chemical, protect plastic bag profits. They spend millions drowning out the voices of thousands of citizens who support bans on plastic bags.<sup>13</sup>
- **Not made in Oregon:** Single-use checkout plastic bags are not manufactured in Oregon, but greener alternatives are. That means more jobs for Oregonians and less money for large oil corporations, and a cleaner local environment.

**A City of Corvallis ban will make a difference:**

- **Opportunity for leadership:** Local ordinances stand a better chance against special interest opposition. Corvallis has the chance to set an example for other communities, and lay the groundwork for a statewide solution in 2013.
- **Big Impact:** Corvallis is known for its environmental standards nationwide, and has received numerous awards. Passing a ban here will have a greater impact on our environment than any other single community.
- **Strong Support:** Already, more than 50 businesses, and thousands of citizens in Corvallis support this effort. All we need is City action.

**Figure 1: Plastic generation and recover, 1960 to 2010 (U.S. EPA Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery, November 2011)  
[Measured in millions of tons]**



**Recycling is Insufficient**

Despite decades of educational programs and concentrated efforts to recycle plastic, national recovery rates have grown anemically over the last 50 years, and have actually dropped when compared to consumption.

**Recycling rates for plastic bags actually dropped between 2009 and 2010:** In 2009 the EPA stated that the recycling rate for plastic bags was 6.1%,<sup>10</sup> and in 2010 only 4.3% of bags produced were recycled.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Barrows. "Briefing Paper: What are 'Conversion Technologies?'" Oregon State of Department of Environmental Quality. Web: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/docs/sw/2050vision/BriefingPaperConversionTechnologies.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> "An Overview of Carryout Bags in Los Angeles County: A Staff Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors" Aug 2007. Accessed 2/15/12

<sup>11</sup> Egan and Fuchs, "Checkout Bag Charge, Economic Impact Report" Prepared for the City of San Francisco, Office of Economic Analysis, 9/30/2011, [http://plasticbaglaws.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/leg\\_SF\\_economic-report-PowerPoint.pdf](http://plasticbaglaws.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/leg_SF_economic-report-PowerPoint.pdf). Accessed 2/15/12

<sup>12</sup> Superior Court of California, County of Marin, 9/13/11 accessed 2/15/12 [http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/marincounty\\_tntvruling.pdf](http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/marincounty_tntvruling.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> US EPA, Office of Solid Waste. Municipal Solid Waste in the United States; 2009 facts and Figures. December 2010

<sup>11</sup> US EPA, Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery. Municipal Solid Waste in the United States; Tables and Figures for 2010. November 2011

<sup>13</sup> ...

# REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE – Community Plastic Bag Bans

## Resources for Small Business

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Small businesses in Oregon, California, and Washington—and around the country—are signing on to support plastic bag bans by the hundreds, and reducing ocean pollution and litter in doing so. We can learn a lot about how bag bans are successfully implemented from communities that have already enacted bans. There are many resources and strategies already for ensuring the transition for small businesses and their customers is as least disruptive as possible, and a sustainable business decision they can applaud.

### Preparation & Implementation

- **ADEQUATE TIME TO USE REMAINING SUPPLY OF PLASTIC:** In most cities, an agreed upon time before the ban takes effect allows businesses to use up their current stock of plastic bags.
- **PREPARING & REMINDING CUSTOMERS:** Posted signs in stores and parking lots about a soon-to-be implemented bag ban have helped prepare customers for the change. Signs help remind customers once the ban has taken effect are also helpful. City websites can make suggested signage available.
- **INFORMATIONAL CITY WEBPAGE:** Cities often make available resources for businesses, like Portland's [www.bringyourbagpdx.com](http://www.bringyourbagpdx.com) that featured suggests messaging for customers and window signs that could be downloaded and placed at the entrance of store. It also contains educational materials and an FAQ section.
- **EDUCATIONAL EVENTS & COMMUNITY SUPPORT:** Non-profit organizations have organized public education and outreach in many communities to support a smooth transition. Common events include distributing free bags at kick-off events and preceding the ban.
- **PROVIDING FOR VULNERABLE CITIZENS:** In Portland, low-income residents and seniors can obtain a free reusable bag from the city, and similar efforts have been in place from the non-profit and business community in cities around the country. Non-profits have often stepped up to the plate providing a supply of reusable bags for such efforts.



Portland's sample reminder signs for retailers.

### Reusable Bag Companies

While this is not an exhaustive list of reusable bag manufacturers, it is a helpful starting point for businesses looking to carry reusable bags for customers to purchase. (List current as of September 27, 2011)

- Baggu — <http://baggubag.com/#Shop>
- Bag-It System — <http://www.bagitsystem.com>
- Bags on the Run — <http://www.bagsontherun.com/>
- The Better Bag — <http://thebetterbag.com/purchase.html>
- Bring Your Own Reusable Bag — <http://www.byorb.com>
- Bulletin Bag — <http://www.bulletinbag.com/fold-up-bags/view-all-products.html>
- Chico Bags — <http://www.chicobag.com/>
- Eco Bags — <http://www.ecobags.com>
- Eco Swag — <http://ecoswag.com/>
- Envirosax — <http://www.envirosax.com/>
- Enviro Tote, Inc. — <http://www.enviro-tote.com>
- Green Bag — <http://greenbagco.com/>
- Keep Cool — <http://www.keepcoolusa.com/>
- Leslie Jordan, Inc. — <http://www.lesliejordan.com/index.html>
- One Bag at a Time — <http://www.onebagatitime.com/shop/bags.html/>
- Planet Earth Bag — <http://www.planetearthbag.com>
- Project Green Bag — <http://www.projectgreenbag.com/>
- Reuseit — <http://www.reuseit.com/store/reuseit-workhorse-original-bluesign-fabric-p-2391.html?>

## Recycling Cannot Solve Oregon's Plastic Bag Problem

### Less than 5 percent of plastic grocery checkout bags are recycled.<sup>1</sup>

- According to the EPA, only 4.3 percent of all plastic grocery checkout bags in the US were recycled in 2010<sup>2</sup>, down almost 2 percent from 6.1 percent the previous year<sup>3</sup>.
- Plastic production has outpaced recycling for the past 50 years.<sup>4</sup>

### Plastic bags interfere with the operation of Oregon's recycling facilities.

- When plastic bags pollute mixed recyclables, they get tangled in recyclers' machinery, causing plants to shut down.
- The Association of Oregon Recyclers found that even though Plastic Bag Film represents only 0.1% of incoming volumes, 20-30% of labor costs for MRF's in the Portland Metro Area are spent dealing with plastic film.<sup>5</sup>

### Voluntary recycling programs have proven insufficient to solve plastic bag pollution.

- California attempted to reduce litter by requiring grocery companies to place recycling bins in front of their stores. However, the state has seen no noticeable change in litter or waste from plastic bags.<sup>6</sup>
- California's program has only managed to increase plastic bag recycling by 2 percent in 3 years.<sup>7</sup>
- Voluntary approaches like this are often supported by the plastic industry and tend to preempt local governments and prevent them from taking action to reduce litter and waste.<sup>8</sup>

### Plastic bags that do end up collected for recycling are mostly exported to China, where they cause environmental and health problems.

- China accepts more than half of all reclaimed plastic bags for recycling and that number is rising.<sup>9</sup>
- Plastic bag recycling plants in China expose workers to toxic fumes, create a haze that hangs over villages, and pollute groundwater sources.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> US EPA, Office of Resource Conservation and Recover. Municipal Solid Waste in the United States; Tables and Figures for 2010. November 2011.

<sup>2</sup> See note 1

<sup>3</sup> US EPA, Office of Solid Waste. Municipal Solid Waste in the United States; 2009 facts and figures. December 2010.

<sup>4</sup> See note 1

<sup>5</sup> The Association of Oregon Recyclers found that even though Plastic Bag Film represents only 0.1% of incoming volumes, 20-30% of labor costs for MRF's in the Portland Metro Area are spent dealing with plastic film.

<sup>6</sup> CalRecycles, 2009. Available at: <http://calrecycle.ca.gov/plastics/AtStore/AnnualRate/2009Rate.htm>

<sup>7</sup> See note 5

<sup>8</sup> Mark Daniels, Vice President of Sustainability & Environmental Policy at Hilex Poly. "Seattle's plastic bag ban ignores reality." Crosscut, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Available at: <http://crosscut.com/2012/01/05/environment/21760/Seattle-s-plastic-bag-ban-ignores-reality/>

<sup>9</sup> Moore Recycling Associates, Inc. 2009 National Postconsumer Recycled Plastic Bag & Film Report. February, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Want China Times. Meltdown: China's plastic recycling carries toxic toll. 7/6/11. Available at <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20110706000011&cid=1505&MainCatID=15>

# List of Plastic Bag Laws

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## Alaska

**Bethel:** City officials voted in July 2009 to ban plastic bags and takeout containers. The ban went into effect in September 2010.

**Fairbanks:** In September 2009, Fairbanks adopted a 5 cent price requirement on plastic bags. This was rescinded one month later.

**Hooper Bay:** The plastic bag ban in Hooper Bay went into effect in August 2010.

## America Samoa

On February 23, 2011 a law went into effect; banning wholesale and retail establishments from directly or indirectly providing customers with plastic shopping bags. Biodegradable and compostable plastic bags are exempted as are bags used for certain products including raw meats, fresh produce and prepared meals in takeout containers

## Arizona

**Bisbee:** In December 2012, the City of Bisbee passed a voluntary six month reduction period for single-use bag distribution. After the six months, council can either extend the voluntary period, or mandate a 5 cent charge on plastic bags in large retail stores.

## California

**Alameda County and City, Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Newark, Oakland, Piedmont, Pleasanton, San Leandro, and Union City :** The Alameda County Waste Management Authority (StopWaste.org) adopted its ordinance banning plastic bags and placing a 10 cent price requirement on paper and reusable bags in January of 2012. It goes into effect on January 1, 2013 in unincorporated Alameda County as well as its 14 incorporated cities.

**Calabasas:** The Calabasas City Council unanimously adopted a plastic bag ban with a minimum ten cent price requirement on paper bags in February 2011.

**Fairfax:** Fairfax adopted its ban on plastic bags August 2007. After a legal challenge by the plastic industry, Fairfax voters overwhelmingly adopted a plastic bag ban by initiative in November 2008.

**Long Beach:** On May 17, 2011, the City of Long Beach passed a bag ordinance with a 5-0 vote. It banned single-use plastic bags and placed a 10 cent minimum price requirement on paper bags. The ordinance is effective in larger stores starting in August 2011, and will expand to others stores in 2012.

**Los Angeles County:** Los Angeles County banned plastic bags and placed a 10 cent minimum price requirement on recycled paper bags in November 2010. It is effective July 2011, and expands to other stores in January 2012.

**Malibu:** The Malibu City Council voted to ban plastic bags in May 2008.

**Manhattan Beach:** The Manhattan Beach City Council voted to ban plastic bags in July 2008. The CA Supreme Court overturned a legal challenge to the ordinance in July 2011.

**Marin County:** Marin County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously in favor of an ordinance banning single-use bags and a 5-cent fee on paper bags in January 2011, effective January 2012.

**Millbrae:** On February 14, 2012, the Millbrae City Council adopted a plastic bag ban with a 10 cent requirement on paper bags. The ordinance goes into effect on September 1, 2012 in all retail establishments, except for restaurants, non-profits, and dry-cleaners.

**Monterey:** The Monterey City Council unanimously passed an ordinance on December 6, 2011. The ordinance bans plastic bags and places an initial 10 cent minimum price requirement on paper bags for the first year (25 cents after).

**Palo Alto:** The Palo Alto City Council voted March 2009 to ban plastic bags at large supermarkets and announced their intention to consider expanding the ban to cover all retail stores as well as enacting a fee on paper bags.

**Pasadena:** In November of 2011, the Pasadena City Council unanimously adopted a plastic bag ban with a 10 cent minimum price requirement on paper bags. Effective July 1, 2012 for large stores and supermarkets and December 2012 for convenience stores.

**San Francisco:** San Francisco became the first city in the nation to adopt a ban on plastic shopping bags in April 2007. In February of 2012, the Board of Supervisors voted to expand the ordinance to more stores.

**San Jose:** San Jose City Council passed a ban on plastic bags in December 2010. It is effective January 2012. For the first two years, paper bags will be sold under this ordinance at 10 cents each; after two years the minimum price per paper bag is 25 cents each.

**Santa Clara County:** On April 26, 2011, the County Board of Supervisors voted in favor of a single-use bag ordinance. The ordinance bans single-use plastic bags and places a 15 cent minimum price requirement on single-use paper bags throughout unincorporated county areas. It is effective January 1, 2012.

**Santa Cruz County:** On September 13, 2011, the County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously in favor of a single-use bag ordinance. It bans single-use plastic bags and places a 10 cent minimum price requirement on single-use paper bags throughout unincorporated county areas. It is effective March 20, 2012.

**Santa Monica:** The Santa Monica City Council unanimously voted for a ban on single-use plastic bags and a cost pass-through requirement per recyclable paper bag in January 2011.

**Sunnyvale:** Sunnyvale passed a bag ordinance in December 2011. The ordinance bans single-use plastic bags and places a 10 cent minimum price requirement on paper bags which later increases to 25 cents. Starting June 20, 2012 it covers grocery and convenience stores and large retailers, expanding to cover all retailers by March 2013.

**San Luis Obispo County and City, Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach:** The San Luis Obispo County Integrated Waste Management Authority adopted a plastic bag ban with a 10 cent minimum price requirement on paper bags in January of 2012. It goes into effect on 9/1/12 in all seven incorporated cities as well as unincorporated areas of the county.

## Colorado

**Aspen:** The city of Aspen banned plastic bags and placed a 20 cent charge on paper bags in October 2011. It is effective in May 2012 in the city's two grocery stores.

**Basalt:** The city of Basalt passed an ordinance placing a 20 cent charge on both single-use plastic and paper bags in September 2011. Effective May 2012 in grocery stores.

**Carbondale:** The Carbondale Board of Trustees approved an ordinance in October 2011. Like Aspen's ordinance, it bans plastic bags and places a 20 cent charge on paper bags in grocery stores with 3,500 square feet or more. Effective May 2012.

**Telluride:** The town of Telluride, CO banned plastic bags in October 2010. The ban went into effect March 2011, with a 10 cent price requirement on paper bags.

## **Connecticut**

**Westport:** In September 2008, Westport became the first Connecticut city to ban plastic bags.

## **District of Columbia**

**Washington:** The District of Columbia Council voted June 2009 to require retailers to charge a \$0.05 fee on all carryout bags.

## **Hawaii**

**Hawaii County:** The Big Island of Hawaii banned single-use plastic bags in January 2012.

**Kauai County:** Kauai banned plastic bags in October 2009. The ordinance became effective on January 11, 2011.

**Maui County:** Maui banned plastic bags in August 2008. The ordinance became effective on January 11, 2011.

## **Maryland**

**Montgomery County:** The County followed the example of the neighboring District of Columbia and passed a 5 cent minimum price requirement on single-use plastic and paper bags in May 2011. It is effective January 2012. Unlike the DC ordinance, this ordinance applies to all retailers.

## **New York**

**East Hampton:** In August 2011, the East Hampton Village Board approved a plastic bag ban. Effective February 2012.

**Rye:** In December 2011, the Rye City Council unanimously adopted a plastic bag ban at all retail stores. Effective May 7, 2012.

**Southampton:** In April 2011, the Southampton Village Board unanimously approved a ban on non-biodegradable bags for retailers, supermarkets and restaurants. Effective November 6, 2011.

## **North Carolina**

**Hyde, Currituck and Dare Counties:** The North Carolina Legislatures banned plastic in the Barrier Islands in June 2009. The ban was extended to all businesses in the three counties in 2010.

## **Oregon**

**Portland:** Portland became the first city to adopt a ban on plastic bags in July 2011, after the state legislature failed to pass a statewide ban. Effective October 15, 2011.

## Texas

**Brownsville:** The City of Brownsville became the first in its state to restrict plastic bags in 2009 with a \$1 charge per transaction. The ordinance became effective January 2011. (See Municipal Code, Chapter 46, Article II, Section 46).

**Fort Stockton:** In 2010, the City of Fort Stockton banned single-use plastic bags from stores, effective September 2011 (See Municipal Code, Article I, Section 12-9).

**South Padre Island:** In January 2011, South Padre Island passed a bag ordinance banning plastic single-use carryout bags that is effective 2012.

**Austin:** The City of Austin might enact one of the broadest bag bans in the nation and prohibit disposable paper and plastic bags at all checkout counters starting in January 2016. In the meantime, starting in 2013, retailers could continue to offer thin, so-called single-use bags, but customers would have to pay 25 cents apiece for them, according to a draft of the ban. That three-year period would give the public and retailers time to prepare for the ban, city officials say.

## Washington

**Bellingham:** Bellingham banned plastic bags and placed a 5 cent minimum price requirement on paper bags in July 2011.

**Edmonds:** Edmonds banned plastic bags at all retail stores in July 2009.

**Mukilteo:** The City of Mukilteo banned plastic bags in December 2011. Effective 1/1/13.

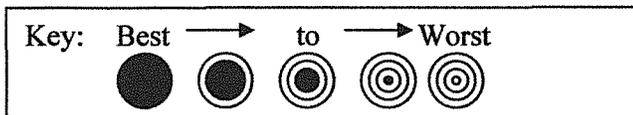
**Seattle:** In December 2011, the Seattle City Council unanimously passed an ordinance banning single-use plastic bags and putting a 5 cent minimum price requirement on single-use paper bags. Effective 7/1/12.

Previously, the Seattle City Council voted to require retailers to charge a \$0.25 on all single-use carryout bags in July 2008. The ordinance was overturned by a plastic industry-financed initiative one year later.

This information is from: [http://www.campaignforrecycling.org/our\\_issues/plastic/plastic\\_bags/current\\_laws](http://www.campaignforrecycling.org/our_issues/plastic/plastic_bags/current_laws)

PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION/REUSABLES ENHANCEMENT  
OBJECTIVES ANALYSIS BY STAFF

	PRIME OBJECTIVES		CONSEQUENCES		
	Reduce Plastic Bag Distribution	Maximize Conversion to Reusable Bags	Minimize Conversion to Paper	Avoid Increased Costs to Stores	Avoid Increased Costs to Consumers
I. PROMOTE REUSABLES ONLY					
II. TRY MORE PROMOTION FIRST					
III. FEES FOR ALL BAGS NOW					
IV. BAN PLASTIC NOW					
V. BAN PLASTIC, PAPER FEES NOW					
VI. BAN PLASTIC & PAPER NOW					



ATTACHMENT F

PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION/REUSABLES ENHANCEMENT FOR LARGE GROCERS

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PROGRAM ALTERNATIVE	GROCER'S REACTION	CITY STAFF ANALYSIS
I. PROMOTE REUSABLES ONLY	Best Approach. Stores can help with resources.	Not enough impetus for change, key programs have been attempted for years.
II. TRY MORE PROMOTION FIRST	Not as desirable as I. Bans and fees are not favored by stores.	Not enough action soon. May as well wait for State fees to kick in.
III. FEES FOR ALL BAGS NOW	Fees are not desired. But at least all bags are treated equally and a switch to paper is avoided.	Theoretically sound. But no other U.S. Cities have done this to date & current State statute prevents (Seattle in progress.)
IV. BAN PLASTIC NOW	Failure to act on both plastic and paper simultaneous will cause switch to paper and increase costs to stores.	Certain reduction in plastic. Meets a key objective.
V. BAN PLASTIC, PAPER FEES NOW	While action on paper & plastic is simultaneous, shift to paper can increase food costs above neighboring cities (Avg = 0.04 %)	Best approach as best meets all objectives. (Increased costs can be avoided by consumers switching to reusables.)
VI. BAN PLASTIC & PAPER NOW	While bans are not favored, at least takes simultaneous action on paper and plastic.	Staff do not believe this alternative is feasible. City lacks rational for banning paper bags.

January, 2012

Attachment H

H1

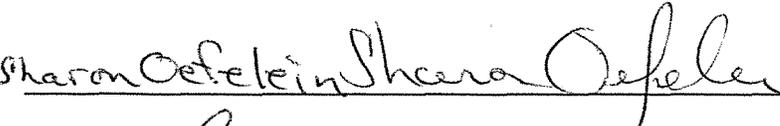
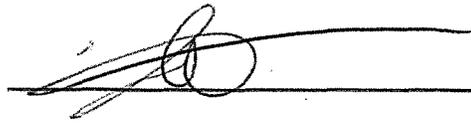
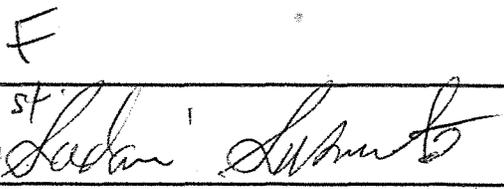
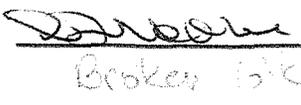
Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
501 SW Madison Ave. PO Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

RE: Corvallis Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance

Dear Mayor and City Council:

We the undersigned business owners and small businesses in Corvallis, Oregon value the natural beauty of our state and want our environment and coasts to stay pristine. We want to express our support of a Single-Use Checkout Plastic Bag Ban here in Corvallis for the following reasons:

1. **Cost Incentive.** Retailers spend hundreds of millions of dollars annually to provide single-use bags to customers. For example, some supermarkets spend up to \$1,500 to \$6,000 a month just to provide single-use bags to their customers at check-out. Many major grocery stores realize this significant cost burden and offer discount incentives to customers who bring their own bags.
  - a. Stores typically pay 2 to 5 cents per plastic bag and 5 to 9 cents per paper bag. This can add up. Therefore a minimal cost incentive of 5-cents per paper bag is reasonable. It is an incentive for people who forget their canvas bag, and to partially compensate retailers.
2. **Environment.** As businesses, we are also concerned with the environmental and economic impacts of plastic bag pollution in inland and coastal communities throughout the country. Americans use an estimated 102 billion single-use plastic bags every year.
  - a. The decision to recycle our way out of this problem is a false option. Despite efforts to expand recycling programs, a small percentage of single-use plastic bags are recycled. The rest of these bags end up in our landfills; as litter, clogging storm-drain systems; or make their way to our waterways and ocean.
  - b. It is estimated that 60-80% of all marine debris, and 90% of floating debris is plastic. Plastic lasts for hundreds of years in our environment and may never biodegrade in the ocean. As a result, it poses a persistent threat to wildlife, killing millions of marine animals like sea turtles and sea birds every year.
3. **It's Time.** Portland has banned single-use plastic checkout bags, and cities across the state are moving forward with their own initiatives. Now is the time for Corvallis to demonstrate similar leadership in support of a sustainable future for all people and our natural environment.

Name	Signature	Business	Address
Sharon Oefele		Gracewinds Music	137 SW 3rd
		FLATTAIL BREWERY	
Sadam Sakamoto			151 NW Monroe St Corvallis OR 97330
Ribbs Furniture			334 S.W. 2nd St Corvallis 97333 OR
			119 SW 3rd Corvallis OR 97330

January, 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
501 SW Madison Ave. PO Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

H2

RE: Corvallis Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance

Dear Mayor and City Council:

We the undersigned business owners and small businesses in Corvallis, Oregon value the natural beauty of our state and want our environment and coasts to stay pristine. We want to express our support of a Single-Use Checkout Plastic Bag Ban here in Corvallis for the following reasons:

1. **Cost Incentive.** Retailers spend hundreds of millions of dollars annually to provide single-use bags to customers. For example, some supermarkets spend up to \$1,500 to \$6,000 a month just to provide single-use bags to their customers at check-out. Many major grocery stores realize this significant cost burden and offer discount incentives to customers who bring their own bags.
  - a. Stores typically pay 2 to 5 cents per plastic bag and 5 to 9 cents per paper bag. This can add up.. Therefore a minimal cost incentive of 5-cents per paper bag is reasonable. It is an incentive for people who forget their canvas bag, and to partially compensate retailers.
2. **Environment.** As businesses, we are also concerned with the environmental and economic impacts of plastic bag pollution in inland and coastal communities throughout the country. Americans use an estimated 102 billion single-use plastic bags every year.
  - a. The decision to recycle our way out of this problem is a false option. Despite efforts to expand recycling programs, a small percentage of single-use plastic bags are recycled. The rest of these bags end up in our landfills; as litter, clogging storm-drain systems; or make their way to our waterways and ocean.
  - b. It is estimated that 60-80% of all marine debris, and 90% of floating debris is plastic. Plastic lasts for hundreds of years in our environment and may never biodegrade in the ocean. As a result, it poses a persistent threat to wildlife, killing millions of marine animals like sea turtles and sea birds every year.
3. **It's Time.** Portland has banned single-use plastic checkout bags, and cities across the state are moving forward with their own initiatives. Now is the time for Corvallis to demonstrate similar leadership in support of a sustainable future for all people and our natural environment.

Name	Signature	Business	Address
Aaron A. Weston	<i>Aaron Weston</i>	Troubadour Music Center	521 SW 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. <span style="float: right;">Manager</span>
Mr. Kent Bunge, owner	<i>Kent Bunge</i>	Troubadour Music Center	521 SW 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.
Stoker, W. W. Stoker	<i>W. W. Stoker</i>	<del>World</del> World	310 SW 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. <span style="float: right;">owner</span>
Cathy Holdorf	<i>Cathy Holdorf</i>	SIBLING REVELRY	145 NW 2nd Corvallis
<i>MM</i>	<i>MM</i>	Evergreen	136 SW 3RD ST
LUISA ARREOLA	<i>Luisa Arreola</i>	FOOTWISE	301 SW MADISON AVE

January, 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
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H3

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Name	Signature	Business	Address
Abigail Dischler		The Pottery Places	300 SW 2nd Ave
Reed M. W.		River Jewelry	203 SW 2nd
Sally Olafson		Olafson Designs	215 SW 2nd St.
Janice		Laughin Plate Cut	3086 NW Third
Larry Desautiers		Larry Desautiers Pak Sports	207 NW 2nd St 138 SW 2ND ST
Michelle Mould		COSMIC CHAMELEON	

January, 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
501 SW Madison Ave. PO Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

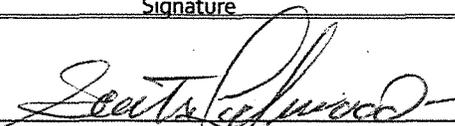
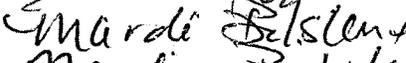
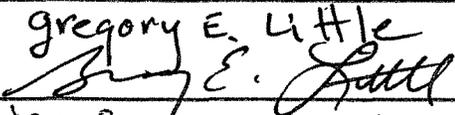
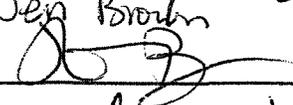
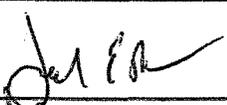
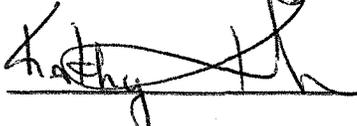
H4

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Name	Signature	Business	Address
		Rebelle's	200 Adams - Downtown
Mardi Bilstein		The Clothes Tree	204 SW Madison
Gregory E. Little		Squirrel's	100 SW 2nd Downtown
Jen Brown		Corvallis Environmental Center	214 SW Monroe Downtown
Joel Rea		Corvallis Brewing Supply	119 SW 4th St 97333
Kathy		Coleman Jewellers	255 SW Madison Corvallis

January, 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
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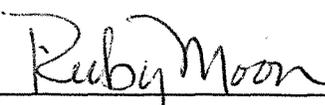
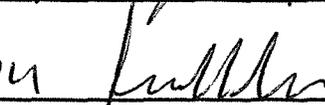
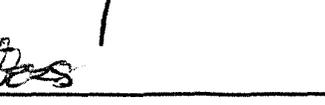
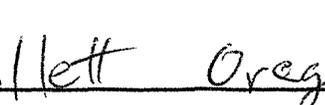
HS

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Name	Signature	Business	Address
Ruby Moon		GoldenCrane	114 S.W. 3rd St C
Ken Baldwin		CenterSpace Software	230 SW 3rd St, Suite 311
James Reismiller		Abundant Solar	7267 NW Grandview D Corvallis, OR 97330
Jerry Larson		WINEOPOLIS	151 NW Monroe 97330
Harry Dreyfus		Harry Dreyfus	151 NW Monroe 97330
Dennis Collett		Oregon Coffee and Tea	215 NW Monroe Ave 97330

January 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
501 SW Madison Ave. PO Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

146

RE: Corvallis Ordinance: "Encourage Reusable Bags and Ban Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bags"

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Single-use plastic bags represent one of the greatest environmental catastrophes of our generation. Around 100 billion petroleum-based plastic checkout bags are used each year in the United States, requiring an estimated 12 million barrels of oil each year. Sadly, less than 5% of these bags are recycled each year and cities, counties, and non-profit organizations must pay millions of dollars each year to clean up plastic litter.

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Many other cities, such as Portland and Seattle, and countries throughout the world have taken similar action to eliminate plastic checkout bags and promote the use of reusable bags. It is now time for Oregon to demonstrate similar leadership in support of a sustainable future for all people and our natural environment.

Sincerely,

Name (CEO or owner):

Kate Tom

Business:

The Fingerboard Exchange

Address:

120 NW 2nd, Corvallis

January 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
501 SW Madison Ave. PO Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

H7

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Sincerely,

Name (CEO or owner): Travis Pridell

Business: Great Harvest Bread Co.

Address: 134 SW 1st St, Corvallis, OR 97333

January 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
501 SW Madison Ave. PO Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

H8

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Sincerely,

Name (CEO or owner): MIKE ANDERSON  
Business: ANDERSON JEWELERS  
Address: 457 SW MADISON AVE.  
CORVALLIS, OR 97333

January, 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
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Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

H9

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Name	Signature	Business	Address
WILLIAM B SHUMWAY	<i>William Shumway</i>	PERENNIAL FRAME STUDIO FURNITURE	341 SW 2nd St CORVALLIS OR 97330
<i>Don Ferguson</i>	<i>Don Ferguson</i>	<i>Spencer Smith</i>	461 SW 2nd Corvallis 151 NW Monroe Ave Corvallis OR 97330
<i>Patricia Lebar</i>	<i>Patricia Lebar</i>	SADA SUSHI & IZAKAYA	Corvallis OR 97330
<i>St. Vit</i>	<i>St. Vit</i>	Avalon Wine	201 SW 2nd St. Corvallis, OR 97330
<i>Frankie &amp; Robert</i>	<i>Frankie &amp; Robert</i>	Art in the Valley	209 SW 2nd Street
<i>Jessie</i>	<i>Jessie</i>	MONA LISA'S TRIMMING	1335 W. 2nd St

January, 2012

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Name	Signature	Business	Address
Peba Wamthiri		Spice & Tea Co. Inc.	215 SW 3rd St. Corv. 97333
Tim Spence		Bike n' Hike	401 SW 3rd Corv. 97333
Mr. Teresa Cochran		Blue Monkey GF Bakery	363 SW 97333 Jefferson
Tommy Lynch		M.R.'s Market	300 SW 4th St Corvallis
Julianna Thoenes		Replay Childrens Wear	250 NW 1st Street
Paul Turner		Parkside Cinema	215 SW 4th 97333

January 2012

Mayor Julie Manning and Corvallis City Council  
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Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

H11

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Sincerely,

*Susan Weckster*

Name (CEO or owner): Susan Weckster, Shop Manager

Business: Cat's Meow Thrift Shop

Address: 411 SW 3rd St, Corvallis

*I would want to see an exception made for re-use of existing plastic bags. Our non-profit uses 100% donated already-used plastic bags. It is better to re-use these than put them in the landfill.*

January 2012

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H12

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Sincerely,

Name (CEO or owner):

BRANT POLLARD [Signature] Pres

Business:

MALMAC, INC DBA MEG RIVER RESTAURANT

Address:

101 NW JACKSON AVE 101 PAT #12R FINE  
BEG RIVER BROS LLC  
COLUMBIA

January 2012

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H13

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Sincerely,

Name (CEO or owner):

THANH HOANG

Business:

BAGUETTE

Address:

121 SW 3RD

Do not support automatic 5-cent fee for paper bags.

Will not charge 5¢ for larger paper bags.

January 2012

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H14

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Sincerely,



Name (CEO or owner):

Pamela Hood Szivek

Business:

Corvallis Children's Therapy

Address:

456 SW Monroe #102  
Corvallis OR 97333

## Plastic bags and the influence of bag bans or taxes

Bans and taxes on 100% recyclable, America-made plastic bags are misguided—they weigh down the economy, increase costs and inconvenience consumers.

It's time for a common-sense plastic bag policy that's good for the economy, the environment and working families. Recycling is the best solution for the environment, supports the U.S. economy, and is safer and more convenient for consumers.

### RECYCLING

*100% recyclable plastic bags are better for the environment than the alternatives.*

#### **A better solution to bag bans or taxes is recycling**

- In 2010, nearly 900 million pounds of post-consumer plastic bags, sacks and wraps were recycled. Recycled bags can be manufactured into playgrounds, decking and new bags.
- Hilex Poly's Bag-2-Bag program promotes plastic bag recycling by working with grocery stores and retailers to make recycling easier.
  - Hilex Poly has worked with retailers to establish more than 30,000 plastic bag recycling points across the United States over the past four years.
  - In 2011, Hilex Poly will recycle between 35 to 38 million pounds of post-consumer plastic bags, sacks and wraps.
- Consumers can bring their 100% recyclable plastic bags and wraps to participating stores and drop them into plastic bag recycling bins. From there, the bags and wraps are picked up for recycling.
- According to the EPA, the recycling rate of polyethylene bags, sacks and wraps in 2010 was 14.7%, a 23.8% increase from the rate in 2009. Recycling of polyethylene bags, sacks and wraps has now grown in 9 out of the last 10 years.<sup>i</sup>

#### **Plastic bags have significant environmental benefits over alternatives**

- Plastic bags are more resource efficient, reduce landfill waste and generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions than paper bags. Plastic bags:
  - Take up a significantly less space in a landfill: 2,000 plastic bags weigh 30 lbs; 2,000 paper bags weigh 280 lbs<sup>ii</sup>
  - Generate 80% less waste than paper bags<sup>iii</sup>
  - Make up a small fraction (less than 0.5 percent) of the U.S. municipal solid waste stream<sup>iv</sup>
- For every seven trucks needed to deliver paper bags, only one truck is needed for the same number of plastic bags.<sup>v</sup>
- According to a 2011 study by the U.K. government<sup>vi</sup>
  - A standard paper bag must be reused 3 times "to ensure that they have lower global warming potential than" a single use of a plastic bag
  - It would take 7.5 years of using the same cloth bag (assuming one grocery trip per week) before it's a better option for the environment than a plastic bag reused three times
- Plastic grocery bags require 40% less energy to manufacture than paper bags.<sup>vii</sup>
- The production of plastic bags consumes less than 4% of the water needed to make paper bags.<sup>viii</sup>

- A bag ban won't reduce plastics in landfills or Puget Sound; NOAA has stated that it is unable to find studies to support many of the statements that assert plastic bags cause harm to marine wildlife and that many quotes about plastic marine debris are false, unproven or exaggerated.<sup>ix</sup>

## **JOBS**

*Proposals to ban or tax plastic bags amount to an attack on green American manufacturers and threaten the livelihood of tens of thousands of working families.*

### **A tax on grocery bags hurts America's working class and kills jobs**

- More than 10,000 American families across the nation depend on plastic bag and film recycling for jobs, both in the private and public sectors.
- At a time of record unemployment, American plastic bag manufacturers continued to create jobs with benefits and invest in green technologies that revolutionized the plastic recycling industry.
- Any tax or ban would endanger this quickly growing green industry and impact our nation's global competitiveness.
- Washington, D.C. implemented a five cent tax to negative consequences:
  - Washington, D.C. is set to see an overall wage decrease of \$18 per worker and an elimination of 101 jobs as a result of its tax and lost revenue.<sup>x</sup>
  - The tax will reduce disposable income for Washington D.C. residents by \$5.64 million in 2011.<sup>xi</sup>

## **HEALTH**

*Recyclable plastic bags don't pose the potential health risks associated with reusable bags.*

### **Bag bans or taxes would drive consumers to reusable bags, which have been found to contain lead<sup>xii</sup> and bacteria**

- Hundreds of millions of reusable bags are imported from China<sup>xiii</sup> and other countries each year. While many reusable bags are safe, many have also been found to contain dangerous levels of lead.<sup>xiv</sup>
- The lead, usually found on the inside of reusable bags, can rub off onto food, permitting families to ingest the harmful substance.<sup>xv</sup>
- Lead can cause irreversible damage to the nervous systems and major organs. It inhibits the body's ability to regulate vitamin D, form red blood cells properly, and can cause seizures, coma and death. Children can suffer from developmental delay, lower IQ, hyperactivity, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, impaired hearing and stunted growth.<sup>xvi</sup>
- As a result of these findings, many, including Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) are calling for a federal investigation into reusable bags.<sup>xvii</sup>
- A study by the University of Arizona found that half of all reusable bags contained food-borne bacteria, like salmonella. Twelve percent contained E. coli, indicating the presence of fecal matter and other pathogens.<sup>xviii</sup>
- Harmful bacteria like E. coli, salmonella and fecal coliform thrive in reusable bags unless they are cleaned properly after each use with hot, 140-degree temperature soapy water.<sup>xix</sup>
- A Canadian study found bacteria build-up on reusable bags was 300 percent higher than what is considered safe.<sup>xx</sup>

- Storing these bags in a hot trunk - which many people do so they don't forget them at home – causes the bacteria to grow 10 times faster.<sup>xxi</sup>

### **Reusable bags also contain environmental drawbacks**

- In addition to not being recyclable (as plastic bags are), a recent study by the U.K. government found that a standard reusable cotton grocery bag must be reused 131 times “to ensure that they have lower global warming potential than” a single use of a plastic bag.<sup>xxii</sup>

## **ECONOMY**

*Misguided bans on plastic bags would weigh down the economy, increase costs and inconvenience consumers.*

### **American families are already struggling to pay for food**

- According to the USDA, in 2009, 50.2 million Americans, including 33 million adults and 17.2 million children, did not know where their next meal would come from.<sup>xxiii</sup>
- Food prices are skyrocketing<sup>xxiv</sup>, making now the worst time to be raising grocery bills with an extra tax.
- A growing number of Americans rely on government assistance for food – some 42,389,619 Americans received food stamps in 2010, up 17 percent from the year before.<sup>xxv</sup>
- The National Meals on Wheels program reported that hunger among seniors increased by one million between 2001-2007, with six million facing the threat of hunger<sup>xxvi</sup>
- Each day, 31 million school children rely on the National Free Lunch Program for reduced or free school lunches.<sup>xxvii</sup>

### **Taxes haven't worked in other places, and don't reduce litter**

- Studies show that taxes and bans don't keep plastic litter out of the landfill. Without plastic grocery bags, people just purchase replacement bags—often made of thicker, heavier plastic—and then send those bags to the landfill, too.<sup>xxviii</sup>
- A study by the Northwest Economic Policy Seminar concluded that a bag tax proposed in Seattle would do little to reduce landfill deposits.<sup>xxix</sup>
- A tax would make no difference in litter reduction since plastic bags only make up a tiny fraction (less than 0.5 percent) of the U.S. municipal solid waste stream.<sup>xxx</sup>
- Despite South Australia's ban on plastic bags, which has been in place since 2009, a 2011 litter report found the percentage of plastic bags climbed from 4 percent in 2010 to 12 percent in 2011. The report also found that the ban drove consumers to use and discard reusable, heavier-gauge bags designed for reuse.<sup>xxxi</sup>

### **Plastic bags are the most convenient option at checkout**

- Plastic bags were invented by Swedish engineer Sten Gustaf Thulin in the 1960s.<sup>xxxii</sup>
- Their original purpose was to provide single, strong, high load carrying capacity for users.
- Plastic grocery bags can be made to hold up to 25 pounds of groceries.<sup>xxxiii</sup>
- In the 1980s, grocers began replacing paper bags with plastic ones—this helped to remedy problems associated with paper, including deforestation, higher energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

- 
- <sup>i</sup> [http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/msw\\_2010\\_data\\_tables.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/msw_2010_data_tables.pdf) and <http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/msw2009rpt.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> ABC News: Paper or Plastic? Just the Facts. 1/7/2006. <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=97476&page=1>
- <sup>iii</sup> ABC News: Paper or Plastic? Just the Facts. 1/7/2006. <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=97476&page=1>
- <sup>iv</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Municipal Waste in the United States: 2005 Facts and Figures*. See: <http://www.epa.gov/garbage/pubs/mswchar05.pdf>.
- <sup>v</sup> "RAN Encourages Plastic Bag Recycling;" Nevada News – April 2008; Retail Association of Nevada; <http://www.rannv.org/documents/8/April%202008.pdf>
- <sup>vi</sup> U.K. Environmental Agency. "Life Cycle Assessment of Supermarket Carrier Bags." February 2011
- <sup>vii</sup> "Questions about Your Community Shopping Bags: Paper or Plastic." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- <sup>viii</sup> Boustead Consulting & Associates: "Life Cycle Assessment for Three Types of Grocery Bags—Recyclable Plastic; Compostable, Biodegradable Plastic; and Recycled, Recyclable Paper," 2007.
- <sup>ix</sup> <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/info/plastic.html> and <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/info/faqs.html#5>
- <sup>x</sup> *The Impact of Bill 18-150 on the Economy of Washington, D.C.*; The Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University; January 2011.
- <sup>xi</sup> *The Impact of Bill 18-150 on the Economy of Washington, D.C.*; The Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University; January 2011.
- <sup>xii</sup> "Excessive Amounts of Lead Found in Reusable Grocery Bags Supplied by Major Retailers, New Testing Shows;" The Center for Consumer Freedom; January 24, 2011
- <sup>xiii</sup> Tariff and trade data from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. International Trade Commission.
- <sup>xiv</sup> "Reusable grocery bags, made in China, found to contain lead, fueling calls for FDA investigation;" Lore Croghan; *New York Daily News*; November 15, 2010
- <sup>xv</sup> Assessment of the Potential for Cross Contamination of Food Products by Reusable Shopping Bags; University of Arizona School of Public Health; June 9, 2010.
- <sup>xvi</sup> "Health Effects of Lead Exposure;" Oregon Department of Human Services
- <sup>xvii</sup> 4. "Schumer: Recent Reports Show Popular Reusable Grocery Bags Contain Dangerous Levels of Lead; Calls for Federal Agencies to Ban Grocery Bags with Lead;" United States Senate Press Release and Letter to HHS; November 18, 2010.
- <sup>xviii</sup> "Assessment of the Potential for Cross Contamination of Food Products by Reusable Shopping Bags;" Charles Gerba; University of Arizona; June 9, 2010
- <sup>xix</sup> A Microbiological Study of Reusable Bags and 'First or single-use' Plastic Bags; Environment and Plastics Industry Council; May 20, 2009.
- <sup>xx</sup> A Microbiological Study of Reusable Bags and 'First or single-use' Plastic Bags; Environment and Plastics Industry Council; May 20, 2009.
- <sup>xxi</sup> "Assessment of the Potential for Cross Contamination of Food Products by Reusable Shopping Bags;" Charles Gerba; University of Arizona; June 9, 2010
- <sup>xxii</sup> U.K. Environmental Agency. "Life Cycle Assessment of Supermarket Carrier Bags." February 2011
- <sup>xxiii</sup> US Department of Agriculture, November 2009 and Feeding America
- <sup>xxiv</sup> <http://www.ketknbc.com/news/un-says-food-prices-skyrocketing>
- <sup>xxv</sup> The Wall Street Journal, "In U.S., 14% Rely on Food Stamps"—November 4, 2010.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Meals on Wheels Association of America
- <sup>xxvii</sup> USDA National School Lunch Program, Program Fact Sheet.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/1993102/31039> and <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/bin-line-sales-double-nation-average-after-plastic-bag-ban/story-e6frea6u-1226119243127>
- <sup>xxix</sup> "Analysis of the Seattle Bag Tax and Foam Ban Proposal;" Ronald R. Rucker, Peter H. Nickerson and Melissa P. Haugen; Northwest Economic Policy Seminar; July 25, 2008
- <sup>xxx</sup> *Municipal Solid Waste in the United States: 2009 Facts and Figures*; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; p. 53
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Adelaide Now: Clean Up Australia report shows plastic bag ban not curbing dumping. 2/8/2012
- <sup>xxxii</sup> "Polyethylene 'T-Shirt' Carrier Bag;" European Plastics News; September 26, 2008
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Rhino Bag;" Hilex Poly; 2010

## Plastic bags and the influence of bag bans or taxes

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*The plastic bag manufacturing and recycling industry supports American jobs by creating a resource-efficient, 100 percent recyclable product.*

**The plastic bag manufacturing and recycling industry supports tens of thousands of jobs in the U.S. alone.**

- **Bag bans and taxes endanger this growing industry and kill jobs.** At a time of record unemployment, the American plastic bag industry creates jobs with benefits and invests in new recycling technologies.
- **Anti-bag legislation jeopardizes the economic growth of communities.** As communities increasingly try to attract new business, those that implement bag bans or taxes may be viewed as “unfriendly” to manufacturers and risk losing new jobs to neighboring towns.
- **Banning or taxing bags will stifle future innovations in recycling.** If bag bans and taxes are adopted, there will be little incentive to further improve manufacturing and recycling processes that could help the U.S. use vital resources efficiently.

**Plastic bags are an affordable, sustainable and healthy choice for consumers, communities and businesses.**

- **Consumers are burdened by bag bans and taxes when they can least afford it.** American families are already struggling to pay for groceries, and shouldn't have to choose between bag purchases and food for their table.
- **Small businesses trying to make ends meet can't afford more “costs.”** Other bag options cost more than plastic and take-up valuable retail space. Both consequences cut into a business's bottom line when there's little room for added costs.
- **Litter does not go away when bag bans and taxes are implemented.** Plastic bags are not the sole cause of the litter problem and, according to the EPA, only make up a tiny fraction (less than 0.5 percent) of the U.S. municipal solid waste stream. As an example, San Francisco's own litter audit found plastic bag litter increased in the year following its ban.
- **The public's health is put at risk with bag bans and taxes.** In lieu of plastic bags, consumers are encouraged to use reusable bags, which have been found to contain lead and bacteria. A study by the University of Arizona found that half of all reusable bags contained food-borne bacteria, including salmonella. Twelve percent contained E. coli, indicating the presence of fecal matter and other pathogens.
- **The environment is put at greater risk with bag bans and taxes.** Plastic bags are more resource efficient, reduce landfill waste and generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions than paper or reusables. For every seven trucks needed to deliver paper bags, only one truck is needed for the same number of plastic bags. According to the U.S. Trade Commission, more than 500 million non-recyclable reusable bags are imported each year, which can be visualized as 4,000 container loads crossing the ocean. If not used to the extent that makes them an environmentally-friendly option, reusables introduce more waste into the environment.

**Plastic bags are recyclable and reusable, making them the best checkout option.**

- **The plastic bag recycling rate is consistently increasing.** Nearly 900 million pounds of post-consumer plastic bags, sacks and wraps (14.7 percent) were recycled in 2010. According to the EPA, that represented a 23.8 percent increase from the rate in 2009. Recycling of polyethylene bags, sacks and wraps has increased in nine out of the last 10 years.
- **Plastic bag recycling drop-off points are available in all 50 states.** Consumers can drop off plastic bags for recycling at convenient locations. Many larger retailers place plastic bag collection bins at the front of their stores for customers.
- **There's no such thing as a “single-use” plastic bag.** Nine out of 10 Americans reuse their plastic bags for household purposes such as from storage to waste disposal to packing material.
- **Recycled plastic bags can be made into new products.** Bags can be recycled into materials used to build playground equipment, decking and new plastic bags, reducing the need for new plastic to be produced.

**Part I – Mark Daniels Testimony**

I 3

Good afternoon, my name is Mark Daniels. I am Vice President of Sustainability and Environmental Policy for Hilex Poly, a manufacturer of plastic bags made from recycled materials and home to the world's largest closed loop plastic bag recycling facility. With me is Rodger Vingelen, a Portland resident and Hilex Western Sales Manager.

We would like to first tell you why we are here, then share with you information about the plastics industry and its sustainability initiatives, and finally set the record straight on plastic shopping bags. From what plastic shopping bags are made of - to the size of their carbon footprint, there is a lot of misinformation out there. To date, we have not effectively separated fact from fiction nor highlighted the industry's sustainability initiatives already well underway. Our goal today is to have a fact-based conversation with you and we ask that you please put aside any preconceived notions about plastic bags or the industry and engage us with an open mind. If we make decisions based on misinformation, thousands of green manufacturing jobs are gone forever and we risk the unintended consequences of a bag ban.

We're here with an open mind and ask that we reason together to make good decisions for Oregon that are based on all the facts.

Hilex Poly has 1250 associates throughout the United States and is part of an industry that directly employs more than 10,000 Americans. There are also thousands of other manufacturing jobs that provide products and services in support of this important United States-based industry. This committee's decision on the proposed Senate Bill 536 will impact the more than 40,000 family members supported by the plastic bag industry.

Hilex is a global leader in recycling technology and major recycler of used plastic bags and wraps. We're home to the world's largest cradle to cradle plastic bag recycling facility. It supports 75 green jobs and in 2011 will recycle 25 million pounds of newspaper, bread and garment bags, pallet stretch film, bottles, and tissue and towel overwrap into new plastic bags. We have more than 30,000 recycling bins placed at grocery stores, schools and churches – many of which are here in Oregon – and we collect and recycle these materials. We've undertaken these sustainability initiatives simply because it was the right thing to do and falls directly in line with a producer's responsibility to care for our environment. Hilex, along with the other plastic bag manufacturers continue to invest in new technologies to continue the tremendous growth in this recycling market.

My colleague Roger will talk with you shortly about separating fact from fiction, but I'd like to first talk about the laws of unintended consequences. Senate Bill 536 is an attempt to drive consumer behavior to reusable bags. Most of the 2 billion reusable shopping bags imported in just the last four years are made in China, and recent news stories have pointed out that many of these bags contain high levels of toxic lead. Since consumers have no way to tell which bags contain lead or other toxic materials, everyone is at risk. Furthermore, even bags that don't contain lead are a health hazard. Studies show that 97% of people never wash their reusable bags after each use and more than half of reusable bags are contaminated with E-Coli, salmonella and other harmful bacteria from raw meats and other sources. What a choice: forcing consumers to either pay a tax on paper bags or place themselves in harm's way with the unintended consequences of "reusable" bags. Plastic shopping bags, on the other hand, offer consumers a safe, recyclable, convenient and sanitary checkout option.

Given our industry's positive economic impact as well as leadership and innovations in cradle to cradle recycling, we urge the committee to consider a better option than Senate Bill 536 for Oregon. We can work together to author a bill that will create and protect green jobs, increase recycling and recycled content in plastic bags and use common sense judgment to avoid these laws of unintended consequences.

## **Part II – Rodger Vingelen Testimony**

Good afternoon, my name is Rodger Vingelen. As Mark Daniels mentioned, I am a Portland resident, a Hilex Western Sales Manager, and am proud to work for the world's largest closed loop plastic bag recycling facility. Mark talked about the industry's positive impact on the economy and environment. I'd like to talk about the facts so that we can make the right choice for our state.

Often times, our product is referred to as "single use" or "disposable" – I beg to differ. Studies in California, Seattle, and our state of Oregon verify that nearly nine out of ten Americans reuse plastic bags as bin liners, for pet waste containment, or for other uses around the house. This is of enormous economic value to folks in Oregon as they do not need to purchase plastic trash bags for the same utility.

This phenomenon is best exemplified by the implementation of a plastic bag tax in Ireland. Did the number of plastic grocery bags decline? Yes – but what many ban and tax proponents never mention is that the purchases of heavier, larger plastic trash bags increased by more than 400% and the net plastic in the environment actually increased in volume.

In terms of litter, everyone in this room and every Hilex associates detests litter. To put the issue of littered plastic bags into perspective, there are several studies – from Florida, Texas, Washington, San Francisco, and Seattle among others – that document plastic shopping bag litter consistently being a fraction of 1% of all items littered. It is often reported that this litter ends up in the so called “great Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch,” killing a 100,000 marine mammals. This myth has been challenged by NOAA – the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. They categorically state: *We were able to find no information to support this statement. An erroneous statement attributing these figures to plastic bags was published in a 2002 report published by the Australian Government; it was corrected in 2006.*

Additionally, Angel White, an assistant professor of oceanography at Oregon State University recently published a study about the Pacific Gyre and according to the study, “The hyperbole about plastic patches saturating the media rankles White, who says such exaggeration can drive a wedge between the public and the scientific community.”

The proposed Senate Bill 536 before the committee would ban a convenient, 100% reusable, 100% recyclable, 100% toxin-free plastic bag – made in the United States as a byproduct of clean, abundant natural gas. It would place a minimum of an \$18 million tax on the citizens of our great state – and would that money go toward Oregon’s environmental initiatives, solving the 10.6% unemployment, helping the homeless, or to improving school programs? No, it will instead go directly into the pockets of grocery and drug store chains – increasing their profits by millions of dollars each year, while we consumers pay the price. It shouldn’t surprise us that they support Senate Bill 536.

Our goal today was to have a fact-based conversation with you and based on the facts, we urge the committee to consider a better option for Oregon than Senate Bill 536.

If you would like studies with citations and references, we are happy to provide you with copies. Mark and I, along with the families that depend on our company and the industry sincerely appreciate your consideration to designing a better option for Oregon – one that creates and protects green jobs, increases recycling and recycled content in plastic bags and uses common sense judgment to avoid the laws of unintended consequences.

Thank you,

Mark T. Daniels

VP of Sustainability &  
Environmental Policy

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I4

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## Oceanic 'garbage patch' not nearly as big as portrayed in media

CORVALLIS, Ore. – There is a lot of plastic trash floating in the Pacific Ocean, but claims that the "Great Garbage Patch" between California and Japan is twice the size of Texas are grossly exaggerated, according to an analysis by an Oregon State University scientist.

Further claims that the oceans are filled with more plastic than plankton, and that the patch has been growing tenfold each decade since the 1950s are equally misleading, pointed out Angelicque "Angel" White, an assistant professor of oceanography at Oregon State.

"There is no doubt that the amount of plastic in the world's oceans is troubling, but this kind of exaggeration undermines the credibility of scientists," White said. "We have data that allow us to make reasonable estimates; we don't need the hyperbole. Given the observed concentration of plastic in the North Pacific, it is simply inaccurate to state that plastic outweighs plankton, or that we have observed an exponential increase in plastic."

White has pored over published literature and participated in one of the few expeditions solely aimed at understanding the abundance of plastic debris and the associated impact of plastic on microbial communities. That expedition was part of research funded by the National Science Foundation through C-MORE, the Center for Microbial Oceanography: Research and Education.

The studies have shown is that if you look at the actual area of the plastic itself, rather than the entire North Pacific subtropical gyre, the hypothetically "cohesive" plastic patch is actually less than 1 percent of the geographic size of Texas.

"The amount of plastic out there isn't trivial," White said. "But using the highest concentrations ever reported by scientists produces a patch that is a small fraction of the state of Texas, not twice the size."

Another way to look at it, White said, is to compare the amount of plastic found to the amount of water in which it was found. "If we were to filter the surface area of the ocean equivalent to a football field in waters having the highest concentration (of plastic) ever recorded," she said, "the amount of plastic recovered would not even extend to the 1-inch line."

Recent research by scientists at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution found that the amount of plastic, at least in the Atlantic Ocean, hasn't increased since the mid-1980s – despite greater production and consumption of materials made from plastic, she pointed out.

"Are we doing a better job of preventing plastics from getting into the ocean?" White said. "Is more plastic sinking out of the surface waters? Or is it being more efficiently broken down? We just don't know. But the data on hand simply do not suggest that 'plastic patches' have increased in size. This is certainly an unexpected conclusion, but it may in part reflect the high spatial and temporal variability of plastic concentrations in the ocean and the limited number of samples that have been collected."

The hyperbole about plastic patches saturating the media rankles White, who says such exaggeration can drive a wedge between the public and the scientific community. One recent claim that the garbage patch is as deep as the Golden Gate Bridge is tall is completely unfounded, she said.

"Most plastics either sink or float," White pointed out. "Plastic isn't likely to be evenly distributed through the top 100 feet of the water column."

White says there is growing interest in removing plastic from the ocean, but such efforts will be costly, inefficient, and may have unforeseen consequences. It would be difficult, for example, to "corral" and remove plastic particles from ocean waters without inadvertently removing phytoplankton, zooplankton, and small surface-dwelling aquatic creatures.

"These small organisms are the heartbeat of the ocean," she said. "They are the foundation of healthy ocean food chains and immensely more abundant than plastic debris."

The relationship between microbes and plastic is what drew White and her C-MORE colleagues to their analysis in the first place. During a recent expedition, they discovered that photosynthetic microbes were thriving on many plastic particles, in essence confirming that plastic is prime real estate for certain microbes.

White also noted that while plastic may be beneficial to some organisms, it can also be toxic. Specifically, it is well-known that plastic debris can adsorb toxins such as PCB.

"On one hand, these plastics may help remove toxins from the water," she said. "On the other hand, these same toxin-laden particles may be ingested by fish and seabirds. Plastic clearly does not belong in the ocean."

Among other findings, which White believes should be part of the public dialogue on ocean trash:

- Calculations show that the amount of energy it would take to remove plastics from the ocean is roughly 250 times the mass of the plastic itself;
- Plastic also covers the ocean floor, particularly offshore of large population centers. A recent survey from the state of California found that 3 percent of the southern California Bight's ocean floor was covered with plastic – roughly half the amount of ocean floor covered by lost fishing gear in the same location. But little, overall, is known about how much plastic has accumulated at the bottom of the ocean, and how far offshore this debris field extends;
- It is a common misperception that you can see or quantify plastic from space. There are no tropical plastic islands out there and, in fact, most of the plastic isn't even visible from the deck of a boat;
- There are areas of the ocean largely unpolluted by plastic. A recent trawl White conducted in a remote section of water between Easter Island and Chile pulled in no plastic at all.

There are other issues with plastic, White said, including the possibility that floating debris may act as a vector for introducing invasive species into sensitive habitats.

"If there is a takeaway message, it's that we should consider it good news that the 'garbage patch' doesn't seem to be as bad as advertised," White said, "but since it would be prohibitively costly to remove the plastic, we need to focus our efforts on preventing more trash from fouling our oceans in the first place."

###

Attachment J

From: Joan Wessell <joan@downtowncorvallis.org>  
Subject: May I hear from you?  
Date: January 27, 2012 12:14:20 PM PST  
To: undisclosed-recipients;

1 Attachment, 133 KB

Greetings:

I received the attached correspondence from Linda Lovett, Corvallis Sustainability Supervisor. I will attend to represent DCA Members and would like to report any input you wish to provide. Please send me your comments by return email.

Thanks,

*Joan*

**Joan Wessell, EdM, CMSM**  
**Executive Director**  
Downtown Corvallis Association  
PO Box 1536, Corvallis OR 97339  
460 SW Madison, Suite 9 Corvallis OR 97333  
Voice: (541) 754-6624  
Fax: (541) 758-4723  
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[www.downtowncorvallis.org](http://www.downtowncorvallis.org)

**Downtown Corvallis...just what you're looking for!**



January 24, 2012

Ms. Joan Wessell  
Downtown Corvallis Association  
PO Box 1536  
Corvallis, Oregon 97339

**Public Works Department**

1245 NE 3rd Street  
P.O. Box 1083  
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083  
(541) 766-6916  
FAX: (541) 766-6920  
E-MAIL: [public.works@ci.corvallis.or.us](mailto:public.works@ci.corvallis.or.us)

I feel strongly that there should be no ordinance. This should be a consumer choice and the sustainability people should or could work to educate people on their value system and let the market take care of things. I personally prefer plastic, especially in the rain. I choose paper in good weather if I have no heavy items since the handles don't hold up well on the paper bags. I reuse virtually all of my bags and most bags go into my recycle container when used up or at the store when I use them to take cans and bottles back so they don't leak in my car. I don't see a problem with plastic bags except from the homeless due to general littering. I don't see that behavior changing regardless of what kind of bag is used. These people should get at the root of the problem and that is offensive littering and improper garbage disposal.

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**From:** Joan Wessell [mailto:[joan@downtowncorvallis.org](mailto:joan@downtowncorvallis.org)]

**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2012 12:14 PM

**To:** undisclosed-recipients:

**Subject:** May I hear from you?

Greetings:

I received the attached correspondence from Linda Lovett, Corvallis Sustainability Supervisor. I will attend to represent DCA Members and would like to report any input you wish to provide. Please send me your comments by return email.

Thanks,

*Joan*

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Hi, Joan - I always use cloth bags and don't use plastic. This is, however, a personal choice; I looked at the options and made the decision for myself. I didn't make it for anybody else.

Cut to the chase: this is an attempt to legislate morality. It's an effort by a bunch of blue-nosed Puritans to prevent you from doing anything of which they might personally disapprove. Of course, they do a lot of things of which I personally disapprove, and I would bet good American green that they would scream bloody murder if I tried to stop them.

Hi Joan,

I hate plastic bags, but as a business we must offer a choice to customers, especially in a rainy climate. We chose to get biodegradable bags. Though not perfect, we feel this is our best option. These are not compostable, but biodegradable. As I read the ordinance these won't be allowed. I am also concerned that if this ordinance passes we will be stuck with a bunch of bags we already have and we just printed a year's worth! It doesn't make environmental nor economical sense to not use these bags. Moving from paper to plastic just takes one environmental problem and puts it in another area, whether we use recycled or not resources are still used (it takes a huge amount of water to recycle!)

I hope this helps. Thank you,

I think the bags should be eliminated as the standard. The issue of people using them over and over again for other uses (one I have read about) could be resolved by having an organization design and furnish truly reusable bags to people who requested them on a one time basis – maybe everyone in Corvallis gets a card with a coupon for one bag. I have a ripstop nylon bag in a little pouch that I carry in my purse all of the time – no weight or space – and use it for purchases – it holds a lot! Then additional bags could be for sale at the outlets.

Cathy Kerr, Spiral Design

I feel strongly that there should be no ordinance. This should be a consumer choice and the sustainability people should or could work to educate people on their value system and let the market take care of things. I personally prefer plastic, especially in the rain. I choose paper in good weather if I have no heavy items since the handles don't hold up well on the paper bags. I reuse virtually all of my bags and most bags go into my recycle container when used up or at the store when I use them to take cans and bottles back so they don't leak in my car. I don't see a problem with plastic bags except from the homeless due to general littering. I don't see that behavior changing regardless of what kind of bag is used. These people should get at the root of the problem and that is offensive littering and improper garbage disposal.

I am as concerned about the environment as the next person but choose not to make rules to tell other people how to live.

Peter Ball, Corvallis Insurance

As the new Shop Manager for Cat's Meow, I want to say that I am 100% in favor of a ban on single-use plastic bags. That said, there should be an exception for the re-use of existing plastic bags. This is consistent with the Reuse of "Reduce REUSE Recycle". At Cat's Meow we do not purchase ANY bags, but rely on donations of bags (paper & plastic) that have already been used.

Thanks for giving me an opportunity to weigh in on this topic.

Susan Wechsler, Shop Manager

Cat's Meow

I doubt that a small bag fee (5-10 cents) will impact commuter shopping. I can tell you that I am watching the activity and plan to boycott stores that oppose the ban.

I have been bringing my own bags when shopping for years. My friends and I voice our frustration that our purchased goods are in a plastic bag before we can stop it, for example at K-mart. We do not like it that we are not asked first.

Thank you for asking.

Jackie

Jackie Shaw

Get Organized!

Hi Joan,

In my business we do not use bags or plastic bags. We try to recycle everything else we get as far as cardboard and bubble wrap. But, every time I go shopping at the grocery store or any other retail shops I always ask for paper bags or I've invested in the carry bags, which aren't expensive from some of the stores. I'm not sure if this is the feedback you are looking for but I definitely do not support plastic bags and would love to see this change to help make the environment better.

Thank you,

Stacy Holder  
Budget Blinds  
[Sholder@budgetblinds.com](mailto:Sholder@budgetblinds.com)

Joan,

It's time to move as a society towards a sustainable future. Single use plastic bags are a luxury we can not afford. They are a convenient but have undesirable consequences in their manufacture and in their eventual disposal. It is in this hidden cost that the equation tips over into the unsustainable. Please convey my approval to ban single-use bags.

Peter Wendel

Hi Joan,

We don't use plastic bags at Footwise - I'm not sure my input would come from a base of experience or knowledge. Paper is a bit more expensive but works well for us - it's a choice I made years ago and am sticking with.

By asking our customers if they need a bag, most say no and more are bringing their own.

This may be too late for your meeting - sorry that I didn't respond sooner.

Dee

We only use recycled paper, so it is not my store's issue.

Thanks for attending though!

(Personally, I am not certain of the environmental savings between paper manufacture and plastic, but as far as disposal of the bags, paper is environmentally more friendly.)

Cathy, Sibling Revelry

Hi Joan:

My 2 cents worth: Donna Bella Lingerie provides customers with a paper bag for their purchases, and for my own personal shopping, I prefer paper.

Hi Joan,

My business doesn't use bags, so I can only reply as a consumer. And really, as an ignorant consumer, because I am unaware of the particular costs and harms of plastic bags versus paper bags versus reusable bags.

What I can tell you is that single-use plastic bags are very convenient for me. I save them, re-use them, and ultimately recycle them. They're light and easy. I do have some reusable bags, which I try to carry around, but often when I need them someone has taken them out of my car for another purpose. They also seem to disappear. I started with 10 canvas bags from the co-op and now seem to have only one.

I can also tell you that I dislike feeling morally judged for my bag choice, and that when I read about a community that has banned single-use plastic bags, I feel that they have "gone too far" along the spectrum of political correctness. And, I don't like it when I have to pay an extra charge for a bag, either.

Given my druthers, I'd prefer to be educated into doing the right thing (whatever that is), instead of legislated into it.

I Hope this is not too cranky!

Vertebrata does not use plastic bags in office. Personally, when shopping we all use re-usable bags or no bag for shopping. Because of our mission, we would like to see as much "eco-friendliness" as can be inherent to people's shopping experience. Whatever we can do as a town to promote this, Vertebrata stands behind. Compostable bags, reusable, or other eco-friendly alternatives get our vote. Plastic bags are terrible for the environment and it is felt that we should lead the way in saying no to the traditional setup.

Be Better,

William J. O'Donnell, DC, DAAML  
Chiropractic Physician