

Data released by the United States Environmental Protection Agency shows that somewhere between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year.

National Geographic News September 2, 2003

Less than 1% of bags are recycled.
It cost more to recycle a bag than
to produce a new one.



- Christian Science Monitor News Paper

“There's harsh economics behind bag recycling: It costs \$4,000 to process and recycle 1 ton of plastic bags, which can then be sold on the commodities market for \$32”

- Jared Blumenfeld
(Director of San Francisco's Department of the Environment)

Then...

Where Do They Go?

A study in 1975, showed oceangoing vessels together dumped 8 million pounds of plastic annually. The real reason that the world's landfills weren't overflowing with plastic was because most of it ended up in an ocean-fill



- U.S. National Academy of Sciences



Bags get blown around...



...to different parts of our lands



...and to our seas, lakes and rivers.

Bags find their way into the sea via drains and sewage pipes



Plastic bags have been found floating north of the Arctic Circle near Spitzbergen, and as far south as the Falkland Islands



Plastic bags account for over 10 percent of the debris washed up on the U.S. coastline



- National Marine Debris Monitoring Program

Plastic bags photodegrade:
Over time they break down into
smaller, more toxic petro-polymers



which eventually contaminate soils
and waterways



As a consequence microscopic particles can enter the food chain



- CNN.com/tecnology November 16, 2007

The effect on wildlife can be catastrophic



- World Wildlife Fund Report 2005

Birds become terminally entangled



- World Wildlife Fund Report 2005



Nearly 200 different species of sea life including whales, dolphins, seals and turtles die due to plastic bags



- World Wildlife Fund Report 2005

They die after ingesting plastic bags
which they mistake for food



- World Wildlife Fund Report 2005

So...

What do we do?

If we use a cloth bag,
we can save 6 bags a week



That's 24 bags a month



That's 288 bags a year



That's 22,176 bags
in an average life time



If just **1 out of 5** people in our country did this
we would save
1,330,560,000,000 bags
over our life time



Bangladesh has banned plastic bags



China has banned free plastic bags



- CNN.com/asia January 9, 2008

Ireland took the lead in Europe,
taxing plastic bags in 2002 and
have now reduced plastic bag
consumption by 90%



In 2005 Rwanda banned plastic bags



Israel, Canada, western India, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Taiwan, and Singapore have also banned or are moving toward banning the plastic bag



On March 27th 2007, San Francisco becomes first U.S. city to ban plastic bags



- NPR.org (National Public Radio)

Oakland and Boston are considering a ban



- The Boston Globe May 20, 2007

Plastic shopping bags are
made from polyethylene:
a thermoplastic made from oil



- CNN.com/tecnhology November 16, 2007

Reducing plastic bags will decrease foreign oil dependency



China will save 37 million barrels of oil each year due to their ban of free plastic bags



- CNN.com/asia January 9, 2008

It is possible...

