

Oxo-Biodegradable Plastics Association

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Bag bans and taxes are failing in the USA

Dallas the latest city council to cancel a 5c charge on plastic shopper-bags, which they had imposed in 2014. Since 2008 several US cities have initiated plastic bag bans and charges but the reasoning behind this is flawed and the tide is now turning in Texas, New York, Arizona, Connecticut, Philadelphia and even a town in California. Many people see these bans and charges as completely unnecessary and as an additional tax, which hits families on low incomes the hardest. You are not being told the truth about plastic bags – see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdQUzxp9Mfw&feature=youtu.be>

Plastic bags for shopping are perfectly designed for the task and more often than not re-used as rubbish bags and bin liners. Paper bags are not fit for this purpose - not only are they awkward to carry and not nearly as strong or flexible as a plastic bag for shopping, but they cannot be re-used and will disintegrate when wet, so sales of plastic bin liners and garbage bags go up as shoppers are forced to spend money on them. In addition to which research has shown that paper bags are far less environmentally friendly than plastic bags when land-use, water, energy and emissions are considered and therefore have a much greater impact on global warming than normal plastic bags.

Normal plastics are made from a byproduct of oil refining which used to be wasted, and the same amount of oil would be extracted from the ground even if plastics did not exist. The strongest argument against plastic bags is their durability, and you don't have to look far to see discarded plastic bags and packaging in the open environment, causing a visual intrusion and being a danger to wildlife.

Old-fashioned plastic can last for hundreds of years, so the problem keeps growing and politicians feel under pressure to act. Bag bans make a grand gesture to let consumers know that the people in charge take the environment seriously, but there is no need to ban plastic bags in the first place because they can now be made with oxo-biodegradable plastic technology.

Oxo-biodegradable plastic is conventional plastic to which has been added small amounts of metal salts (not heavy metals) which cause the plastic, at the end of its pre-determined life (in the presence of oxygen) to change into a non-toxic, biodegradable material, which is bio-assimilated into the environment in the same way as a leaf, only quicker. Better still, it can be made using existing machinery and workforce and can be recycled into similar products if collected in a post-consumer waste stream during its useful life.

This technology offers an insurance that if the item escapes collection, it will degrade and biodegrade in the open environment, on land or sea, in months rather than years. Unlike "compostable" plastic it does not need to be taken to a composting facility. So there is a choice. Do we insist on banning and taxing plastic bags, or do we take a modern approach and use the new technology.

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